

SPIELBERG'S TWILIGHT ZONE: NEW PHOTOS

Rod Serling's  
**THE TWILIGHT ZONE**  
Magazine

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Supernatural  
**CATS!**



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# Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

July/August 1983

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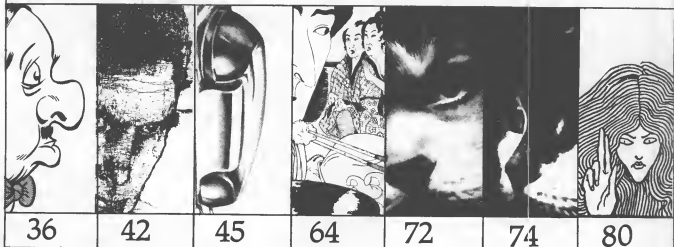
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Cover art by Joe Burleson



## Ailurophilia. . .

There used to be a popular publishing-industry joke about how, since the three subjects dearest to the reading public's heart seemed to be Lincoln, doctors, and dogs, the recipe for a sure-fire bestseller was obviously a book about Lincoln's doctor's dog. (Needless to say, there've been at least two books which used that very title. The more recent sold fewer than two hundred copies.)

Today, however, Abe, M.D.'s, and the pooches have given way to three even more popular subjects: golf, Nazis, and cats. Or so, at least, claims *Punch* editor Alan Coren, who, a few years back, jokingly entitled a collection of his humorous essays *Golfing for Cats* and splashed a huge red-and-black swastika across the cover. (The effect was peculiarly ominous.)

There's no mention of golf in this issue of *Twilight Zone*, and only one passing reference to Hitler and company, but we're up to our asses in cats. In fact, thanks to some judicious arm-twisting by our art director, Pat E. McQueen, most of our illustrators have agreed to add a feline or two to their designs, and at her suggestion we're running, God help us, another little contest, the object of which is to find how many cats are pictured in this magazine. Frankly, since the whole thing is her idea, I think the most logical prize would be a home-cooked dinner provided by Patty herself, or maybe a night on the town with one of her two cats. However, I suspect that might be illegal; so instead, the first nine people (for nine lives, of course) to write in with the correct answer will receive a poster of Maximilian, our cigar-chomping office cat. (Max himself can be seen on page 76.) Okay? Now get to work.

The reason we're so cat-happy this issue is that we're featuring an "epistolary interview" (more on this later) with one of history's greatest ailurophiles, the horror writer H.P. LOVECRAFT. Consider, for example, this recollection of him by Sonia H. Davis, who, shortly after the scene described, became Lovecraft's wife:

My neighbor had a beautiful Persian cat. When Howard saw that cat he made love to it. He seemed to have a language that it understood and it immediately curled up in his lap and purred.

Half in earnest, half joking, I said, "What a lot of perfectly good affection to waste on a mere cat—when a woman might highly appreciate it!"

He said, "How can any woman love a face like mine?"

"A mather can," I replied, "and some who are not mathers would not have to try very hard." We all laughed and Howard went on straking the cat.

Poor Sonia's marriage to HPL lasted only a couple of years, but Lovecraft's affection for cats was unending and—to judge by this reminiscence by W. Paul Cook, who once played host to him—downright inexhaustible:

About midnight, I left Howard sitting at my desk in the study, with the kitten curled up happily in his lap. The kitten, a part-Angara, was an unusually independent, self-centered, cold-blooded member of his tribe, but had yielded to Howard's blandishments . . .

About half-past six in the morning, before galing down to breakfast, I poked my head in the study door.

There sat Howard, in the same pose in which I had left him six hours before, eyes heavy but head unbowed, with the kitten apparently unmoved.

"Good Lord!" I exclaimed, "haven't you been to bed?"

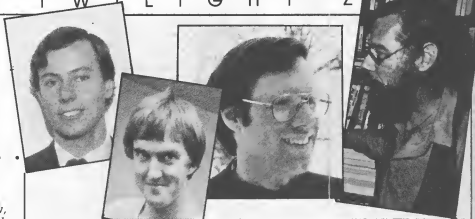
"No," said Howard, "I didn't want to disturb kitty."

Obviously an unusual man. Another remarkable thing: at times he spent almost half his waking hours writing letters (some of them sixty or seventy pages long), and reportedly wrote as easily as he conversed and conversed as eruditely as he wrote. "He was probably the only twentieth

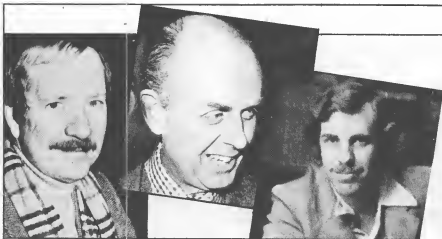
century person in either England or America who actually talked, without the faintest effort or affectation, after the manner of Dr. Samuel Johnson," a friend recalled—and the same, he said, was true of Lovecraft's letters. Notes another correspondent, Willis Conover: "In his letters, Lovecraft wrote exactly as he spoke."

With this fact in mind, and considering the wealth of Lovecraft material to be found in his five-volume *Collected Letters* (published by Arkham House, Sauk City, WI), it's clear that HPL makes the ideal subject for an epistolary interview; indeed, Conover's own Lovecraft memoir is arranged in just such a series of "conversations." Presenting him in this manner (the original suggestion was Carol Serling's) therefore strikes me as perfectly appropriate—as opposed to, say, the practice of Lovecraft's fellow writer August Derleth, who, following the master's death in 1937, churned out a series of stories based on ideas in Lovecraft's notebook, published them under the joint byline "H.P. Lovecraft and August Derleth," and dubbed them "posthumous collaborations."

We chose as our interviewer Lovecraft scholar PETER CANNON, an editor at Crown Publishers here in New York and a stalwart member of the Esoteric Order of Dagon, a small group of HPL fans with a bent for arcane research. Cannon composed last issue's Lovecraftian acoustic and has contributed essays to the journal *Lovecraft Studies* and to H.P. Lovecraft: *Four Decades of Criticism* (Ohio University Press), both edited by still another contributor to this issue, S.T. JOSHI. Lovecraft's most indefatigable bibliographer, late of Brown and currently a doctoral candidate in classics at Princeton. Joshi had originally annotated HPL's "Cats and Dogs" for Marc Michaud's *Necronomicon Press* of West Warwick, RI, today's leading publisher of



Left to right: Cannon, Carter, Duling, Haldeman



Left to right: Wilson, Wynne-Tyson, Zicree

Lovecraftiana; in reprinting the essay here we trimmed it a bit (it's somewhat repetitive), gave it the title *Derleth* (and we) preferred, "Something About Cats," and asked Joshi to write a new introduction.

Repetitive or not, the essay is really the definitive defense of cats. Now, I myself favor dogs; purring's nice, but so's a wagging tail. Besides, cats make me sneeze. And I gather from a recent article in the *Humane Society News* ("Are Cats Smarter Than Dogs?") that the two animals are rather hard to compare; cats, it seems, are quicker to imitate behavior (hence the term "copycat"), but dogs have more convoluted brains and fare better on mazes. Still, old HPL damn near convinces me that cats are the superior breed. In his hands they become ballerinas, poets, aristocrats, and philosophers—veritable gods, in fact, symbols of "the perfect beauty and bland impersonality of the universe itself." Lovecraft may be right; personally, though, I agree with a psychologist friend (and cat-owner), Arlene Klingman, who suggested that there's something a little silly about getting all mystical over "an animal whose greatest intellectual achievement is recognizing the sound of a can-opener."

This issue brings back British writer JON WYNNE-TYSON ("Pigs Are Sensitive," TZ Oct. '82), owner of Sussex's Centaur Press, with a stylish little shocker in the manner of Collier and Dahl. It also marks the return of GORDON LINZNER, the Upper West Side's foremost samurai (despite sandy hair and spectacles), with another eerie tale of Old Japan. Our lead story's by Vermont teacher ENNIS DULING, a former schoolteacher who's now staff writer at *Ski Racing* magazine; he's appeared, too, in *Alfred Hitchcock*. Florida's JACK C. HALDEMAN II has been published just about everywhere, and will return

in a future TZ. Among his recent novels: *Vector Analysis* (Berkley), *Perry's Planet* (Bantam), and *There Is No Darkness* (Ace), a collaboration with his brother Joe. L.A. screenwriter A. WAYNE CARTER has co-written two features for the *National Lampoon* and is currently preparing an original comedy, *Crackerbox*. Kudos, finally, to MARC SCOTT ZICREE, whose *Twilight Zone Companion* (Bantam) was, at last report, well into its fourth printing. It's recently been nominated for this year's American Book Award as best original paperback.

We're reprinting a story this time by British sf pioneer S. FOWLER WRIGHT (1874-1965)—he specialized in tales of the future, often apocalyptic ones such as *Deluge* (1928) and *Dawn* (1929)—and one by ... well, I'd like to call him "our own GAHAN WILSON," but that suggests he hangs around the office here doing odd jobs, when in fact he's busy cartooning for *Playboy* and *The New Yorker*, when not covering movies for us. In putting this issue together, I spent weeks tracking down a marvelous cat story whose title and author I'd forgotten but whose chilling final image had remained with me for decades. I phoned the best brains in the business, people who've read everything—Robert Bloch, Harlan Ellison, Karl Wagner, R. S. Hadji. No luck. I began to wonder if I'd dreamed it, and was planning to ask readers of this column for help, when, in a chance conversation with Gahan, I asked him, just in case, if he'd ever come across a tale about a bookshop and a certain cat ... "Yes," he said, quite matter-of-factly, "I wrote it." Seems it appeared in a 1962 *Playboy*; no doubt I'd been sneaking a look in my father's copy. Anyway, it's in this issue, proof that you sometimes find the things you're seeking in your own backyard.

—TK

## THE TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE

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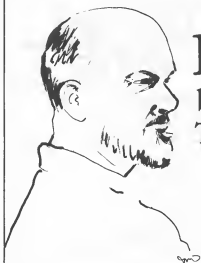
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# Books

by  
Thomas M. Disch

To say that the plot of *Floating Dragon* (Putnam, \$15.95) is wholly preposterous is only to assure its author, Peter Straub, that he has succeeded in his five-hundred-plus-page chosen task. "I wanted a really gaudy fireworks display," Straub is quoted in a *Publishers' Weekly* interview, "—stuff that would make the reader's jaw drop open and make him say, 'I can't believe I'm reading this.' " Which was just what I kept saying to myself somewhere after page 100. After all, I'd had fair warning from *Ghost Story*, Straub's earlier jaw-distender, which I was trapped with two summers ago in a lakeside cabin and read right through to the end, whereupon I chucked my paperback copy into the coal stove and swore, "Never again."

However, a novel about ghosts that climbs to the middle of the bestseller lists and stays there must be taken account of here at TZ, especially when the ads for the book are filled with the plaudits from so many "respectable" venues. It's not enough in such a case to dismiss the book out of hand as boring and silly; it's necessary to explain why so many otherwise intelligent readers can drop their jaws over *Floating Dragon*.

One possible explanation lies buried in a throwaway observation of contemporary life: the wife of one of the protagonists is witnessed simultaneously playing a Joyce Carol Oates novel and watching a James Bond movie on tv. This does not seem, by the tone of it, to be meant as a sneer at Oates; rather, Straub is using standard novelistic operating procedure and revealing social class through brand preference. The

question remains: *how* is one to read an Oates novel and follow a Bond movie at the same time? The answer: just as one reads Straub, for the sake of the "good bits," without an old-fashioned fussy concern for logic and dramatic continuity; with, indeed, a positive relish for the discontinuous, the fragmentary, the nightmare image that pops up (as the *Dragon* of the title makes his first appearance) like a jack-in-the-box.

As horror is the product Straub is merchandising, it is his job, as it is the job of the mad killer in a splatter movie, to produce a large varied stew of victims all suitably flayed, dismembered, and displayed like cuts of meat in a supermarket cooler. This necessitates, as in *Ghost Story*, a large cast of characters to serve as a pool of potential victims. Straub is conscientious in performing this butcher-shop side of his work. There are excellent cuts of beef, pork, veal, many kinds of organ meat, tubs of offal, and wild fowl that literally rain from the skies. Without a continuous drama to make sense of this cornucopia of gore, I confess I tend to lose interest, even to ask myself why I am cooperating with the author in spinning such unseemly fancies through the VCR of my imagination.

Straub plots much as he butchers, producing such a multiplicity of possible explanations that there is sure to be at least one alibi for any crime against logic. His "ghosts" are only as "real" as any particular situation requires; otherwise they're hallucinations produced by the same experimental mind-altering toxin, DRG, that also causes, variously,

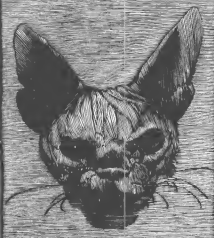
liquefaction of the skin, animal and human suicide, diarrhea in the form of red spiders (though the spiders may be illusory), and kamikaze attacks by flocks of bats. What DRG can't bring off, the baleful and unquiet spirit of Gideon Winter will undertake— including feasts on a geologic scale, as in the sorry fate visited upon the entire congregation of the Greenpoint Congregational Church in August of 1811:

As they sat on either side of their three long covered tables, the lord split open underneath them. Great fissures opened first on the inland side of the Point, and then split seaward quick as you could wink. The first table fell in, and the Reverend Greenough must have seen it. He was standing up of the head of all three tables, saying a prayer. The entire congregation was looking in his direction. Then the lord opened up and swallowed the most inland table before the people around it could scream. You can't tell me Reverend Greenough didn't see *that*.

It takes several more paragraphs, just as slow and fuzzy, for the hungry earth to gobble up all the Congregationalists.

To that, and to *Floating Dragon* as a whole, my reaction can best be summed up by one or all of the following interjections from section 502 ("Unbelief") of *Roget's International Thesaurus, Third Edition*: "I don't believe it! I doubt that! I'm from Missouri, you'll have to show me! Tell it to the Marines! Tell me another! What are you talking about? Where do you get that stuff? Don't give me that! Do tell! Let's hear another! Now I'll tell one! That's what you say! ... Are you kidding? ... Come off it! Aw, now! Go on! My foot! My eye! ... You're crazy! Nonsense! Don't be ridiculous!"

Part of the problem is simply that ghost stories are by their nature short, since the psychology of most literary ghosts is simple in the extreme: they want to getcha. The ghost story is as much a ritual as a form of literature, and its "devotees" bring to bear criteria of judgment that have less to do with criticism than with incantation and magic. The old ways must not be departed from, nor any traditional rite omitted.



Two Barry Moser illustrations from the University of California Press edition of *Alice in Wonderland* (\$19.95). I applauded this book in the Christmas Books column, but the lead-time was too short to show you Moser's original (and rather sinister) approach to Carroll's classic. Behold—and beware—the Cheshire Cat.—TMD

Among contemporary practitioners of the ceremonial ghost story, Karl Edward Wagner, author of *In a Lonely Place* (Warner, \$2.95) is unusual in combining the psychological realism of Ramsey Campbell with the hierophantic pomp of a bishop in a play by Jean Genet. It's all there, so neat and orderly that you can almost see Wagner's exempla grimacing through the translucent medium of his prose, as through a glass darkly. "Sticks" is a Lovecraftian story exactly like one of Lovecraft's own, while ".220 Sw. ft" is a tale of the lost races of a subterranean kingdom, with characters who can unblushingly deliver such lines as "... so far as I know, no one's ever proved the conquistadors mined this far north. For that matter, I don't believe anyone's ever made a serious study of the lost mines of the ancients in the North Carolina and Tennessee hills."

Straub is just as guilty as Wagner of using such pseudohistory as window dressing for his spook show, but with Wagner it's less exasperating, partly because Wagner seems so much more sincere as he performs his ancient rites, partly because there is a dramatic shapeliness to his tales, the result of their having a beginning, a middle, and an end. Things that go bump in the night are generally scarier than things that go bump bump bump bump bump bump bump. (If, for all I can see, you think Straub runs a good creep show and I'm a stick-in-the-mud, don't let that deter you from *In a Lonely Place*, for Wagner's book comes with an introduction by Peter Straub, an introduction

generous in its praise and discerning in its comments.)

From the lost mines of the ancients in the Tennessee hills it's a long, long way to Avalon and the realm, self-styled, of High Fantasy. Since the Tolkien vogue got under way, his epigones have maintained a thriving cottage industry weaving and reweaving, Penelope-like, the same ever-barer threads. Most high fantasy—or novels in the fairy-tale mode—are so bland as to be bromidic. They seem, indeed, to be manufactured, like Valium, for the particular purpose of offering comfort to the terminally insecure. ("Now, don't be afraid, dears! The door will open, and Mother won't turn off the light.") Of all Tolkien's imitators, surely none can rival Terry Brooks, author of *The Elfstones of Shannara* (Del Rey, \$7.95 trade paperback), for slavishness of imitation or poverty of feeling. An evening tramping through Brooks's *Wonder Bread* prose is as exciting as a game of Dungeons and Dragons at a birthday party for pathologically shy six-year-olds. I mean, this is safe stuff. Any little boy or girl who reads Brooks is never going to be tempted to a life of crime—not even jaywalking. And it's popular, if we're to believe the trade paperback bestseller lists.

Clearly, there's no call to review such pabulum for TZ readers, who may be presumed to have progressed beyond the tooth-cutting stage in their literary tastes. I only mention the Sha-Na-Na sagas because for a long time I tarred all high fantasy with the same brush. Now that Gene Wolfe has so conclusively proven that that was unfair with *The Book of the New Sun* tetralogy, I feel I owe the genre a second look. Accordingly, I've chosen four books by writers relatively unfamiliar to me, and the results have exceeded my expectations, ranging, on a scale of 10, from 5½ (dull but capable) to 9 (inspired).

Indeed, that 5½ might well be a



6 or a 7, if I'd had the time and the disposition to slog past the slow opening chapters of *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley (Knopf, \$16.95 for 876 closely printed pages, which must be the year's best hardcover bargain strictly on the basis of avoidance). Bradley's idea—to rewrite the Arthurian legends from a feminist perspective—is both bright in its own right and a talisman to hold up against the looming, spectral fortress of T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*. For White is the competition for anyone aspiring to peddle the Arthurian cycle, and I'm afraid Bradley's *Avalon* hasn't altered that fact. Bright as her idea is, her execution is pretty humdrum—a soap opera where the distaff side is actually using distaffs, instead of drinking coffee, as they conduct their interminable sessions of gossip. Few mattresses have so much padding as *The Mists of Avalon*. Here is a sample:

"Sit still, Iennavan," said Morgause. "Don't you remember when you were a little girl at Tintagel, you used to cry for me to comb your hair because your nurse—what was her name? ... Now, I remember: Gwennis, that was it—she used to pull your hair so, and you would say, 'Let Aunt Morgause do it?'" She teased the comb through the tangles, smoothing out strand after strand, and stroked Morgaine's head affectionately. "You have lovely hair." "Dark and coarse as a pony's mane in winter!"

"No, fine as the wool of a black sheep, and shining like silk," Morgause said, still stroking the dark strands. "Hold still, I will plait it for you ..."

No, I won't hold still, but doubtless there are those who will, and to be fair to Bradley, when her characters get done plaiting braids and spinning distaffs, there is a story that has umpteen times more emotional weight than Brooks's novel-length greeting card. Male readers should be warned, however, that as a purveyor of wish-fulfilling fantasies



(Once upon a time the world was ruled by a Secret Sisterhood, the Druids, and the greatest and loveliest of all the Druids was Vivian, High Priestess of Avalon . . . ), Bradley caters primarily to women, especially women (a majority, I fear) who think there may be something in astrology and psychic powers and that science and reason are tools of patriarchal power.

For wish-fulfilling fantasy with a male orientation, I strongly recommend John Maddox Roberts's *King of the Wood* (Doubleday, \$11.95). As a stylist, Roberts is about on a par with Bradley—unexciting yet unexceptionable—but as a set decorator of an imaginary past, he is both more imaginative and more accurate. (Though I'm not really up to judging the "accuracy" of either book, having little background in either Celtic or Norse archaeology.) Bradley's Avalon, like the cover of her book, is misty and approximate. Roberts's dreamland is chockablock with antiquarian detail that has been well-digested and reconstituted by his imagination, so that the result is not a cabinet of curios but a vivid panorama of a true-seeming never-never-land (a fifteenth-century North America divided into two Norse regions—one Christianized, one still pagan; a Florida ruled by Spanish Muslims; and a thriving Aztec Empire—and all that's just for starters). The jacket copy notes that Roberts is a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism, and it would be hard to imagine a book more creatively anachronistic. The plot is little more than a travelogue, but with so many alternate past cultures to travel to, I didn't really mind.

Unlike ghost stories, high fantasy seems to thrive best where it can sprawl at novel length, rather than when it's potted into short story form—at least if Jessica Amanda Salmonson's anthology, *Heroic Visions* (Ace, \$2.75), is a fair sample. Actually, I suspect it's well above average for the field, with most of the contributors producing work that is either amiable or decorative in the manner of the better sorts of handicraft at a Renaissance Fair. There is also one small masterpiece, "The Monkey's Bride" by Michael Bishop, that completely succeeds at a

task often attempted but very seldom brought off, which is to write an original fairy tale; not a pastiche, mind you, but the genuine article. Salmonson in her introduction decries the legion of Robert E. Howard-imitators who've given the field of high fantasy (or sword-and-sorcery, as it used to be called) its reputation for thud-and-blunder craftsmanship. Her contributors (Leiber, Silverberg, and Russ, among others) are all producing okay stories, but when Salmonson would place these tales in the tradition of the "Aeneid, *Faerie Queene*, *Arabian Nights*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Satyricon*, *Beowulf*, *Genesis* . . . and *Gilgamesh*," I think she's overstated the literary antecedents of that old gang of mine. I'd be much surprised if any authors in her anthology had experienced Vergil, Spencer, or Ariosto as living influences on their work; I'd even be fairly surprised if they'd read any of those three once through, unless they'd had to read Vergil for a Latin class. On the other hand I sympathize with Salmonson's ideal, and I'd wager that any writer who could assimilate such a list of golden oldies so that they were part of his or her operating equipment would be able to knock the whole field of science fantasy off its pins. (Which is just what Gene Wolfe has done, more or less.)

One last sample, and far and away the best book of the lot this month: *Hart's Hope* by Orson Scott Card (Berkley, \$2.75). It's not really fair to Card's accomplishment to label *Hart's Hope* as "high fantasy," since it is a splendid example of a much rarer breed, the fairy-tale novel. Admittedly, Card does fill up some needless pages with standard-issue quest-travelogue; needless, since this is not another volume of imaginary hikes, but rather an allegory of sexual initiation and of the war of the sexes at its bloodiest. Card revels in all the

possibilities of revising human anatomy, from sodomy to vivisection; is obsessed with torture, mutilation, and humiliating punishments; and because his heart is pure (and because he writes beautifully), all the gore he touches turns to narrative gold. I won't tell the story and spoil a single coup de theatre, which in the opening chapters occur at approximately three-page intervals. (Readers who encountered *Hart's Hope* first in *Chrysalis* 8 in its novella version should note that the expanded version is a considerable improvement [i.e., intensification] of the original.)

Card's undoubtedly one of the brightest ascendant stars in the fields of fantasy and science fiction, but few genre readers are probably aware that Card has been publishing a most curious novel, *Notes from a Guardian Angel*, in *7th Street Press*, an "Independent Student Newspaper" disassociated from Brigham Young University. *Notes*, true to its title, is told from the point of view of the guardian angel of a young Mormon, and it has the air, very much, of a fictional self-portrait of the artist as a young Mormon. If so, then Card is a very curious sort of writer, indeed—for what other writer do you know who would have the nerve to describe himself in such terms as these?

Now, there is one thing you must understand. Steven Hyrum Kelly was a good boy, but he was not perfect. He lived in the flesh. Only one of us was so perfect of heart that He passed through mortality touched by temptations but unstained by sin. And the temptation of the flesh has become even more powerful in these lost days. Because the scientists have wrought seeming miracles, mortals have come to believe whatever sounds like science. The enemy has wasted no time teaching mortals to spout rational-sounding explorations of why it's healthier to indulge the lusts of the flesh than to resist them. Let me tell you how Steve was nearly snored by such a lie.

Any writer who can, in all sincerity, produce that paragraph and a book like *Hart's Hope* has got enough interna contradictions to power his own printing press. Bravo and encore! 17

# Screen

by Gahan Wilson

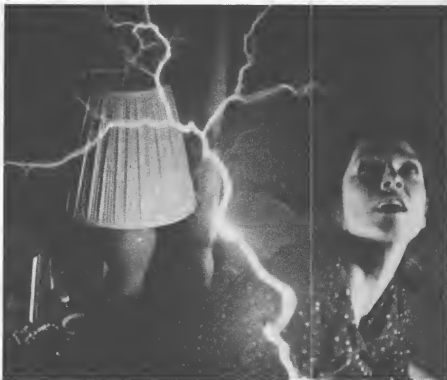


**The Entity**  
(Twentieth Century-Fox)  
Directed by Sidney Furie  
Screenplay by Frank DeFelitta

**Sorceress**  
(New World Pictures)  
Directed by Brian Stuart  
Screenplay by Jim Wynorski

Sex and the cinema of the fantastic have always had a difficult relationship. Sex was always present, of course—it always is—but it tended to be sublimated, its force channeled into wondrously devious paths, or to be blocked by censorship or the odd conventions in the genre. A classical moment of sexual contretemps, beloved by any devotee of monster movies, is the one in which the hairy (or scaled, or mummy-wrapped) Thing staggers confusedly about the Gothic landscape carrying a beautiful half-naked woman with no idea at all in its poor head what to do with her.

Ladies have always had a fatal attraction for monsters, of course; and the one almost certain indication that a particularly scary appearance



"Having aroused the lust of an invisible something-or-other . . ." A terrified Barbara Hershey confronts an extradimensional spook-rapist in *The Entity*.

of the awful Whatsis is coming up has always been the odd moment when, for various poorly explained reasons, all the heroes trek off hither and yon to leave the poor heroine all alone in the old dark house, being careful first to give her the firm instruction, "Stay here—and on no occasion walk down the steps to the crypt!" We know, of course, that she will barely wait for her protectors to be out of her sight before she tiptoes off on her pretty little feet, hurrying down to the dripping depths and a frisson-filled rendezvous with It.

Of course, some monsters have always been a bit more enchanted with the opposite sex than others. Boris Karloff as the Mummy didn't let total desiccation stand in the way of his affection for his long-dead beloved; Myrna Loy couldn't whip handsome lads enough as the daughter of Fu Manchu; dear old

Lionel Atwill was frantic to turn Fay Wray into a dummy in *Mystery of the Wax Museum*. And the champion lecher of them all, of course, was Dracula. No other fantastic fiends, not even the extra-amorous ones just mentioned, approach the Transylvanian Count in his endless pursuit of succulent love objects. No matter whom he's been played by, from lip-licking Bela Lugosi to the lean and hungry Christopher Lee, he's always had just one thing on his mind.

But it has not been sexual intercourse. Along with the rest of his kind, he does not seem to have grasped the conventional sexual techniques. He *means* well, but all he ends up doing is biting you in the neck, and that essentially puts him alongside the Creature from the Black Lagoon, who only dimly understands that the lovely blonde in his arms will not be able to play house with



him underwater.

Now, however, with *The Entity*, we have arrived at a new era in monsters. Now we can see—well, no, we *can't* actually, since the "Entity" is, except very briefly and vaguely, invisible (which constitutes, come to think of it, a rather strong remnant of censorship)—we can, at least, observe the very explicit effects of a monster who indulges in actual sex, and generally even in the missionary position!

*The Entity* is one of those films—increasingly numerous since *The Exorcist*—which are supposedly based on an actual event, and I confess I always find this an extremely irritating ploy. I am perfectly willing to sit back and believe in every minute of *The Wizard of Oz*, grumpy apple trees and all, but put a prologue in front of it stating that it is a fictionalized account of a true incident which happened to a little girl in Akron named Gussie Staniskowski and I will tend to get cranky about everything, including the Cowardly Lion. How much of the film in question is actually supposed to have happened? Is there really any worthwhile documentation on the damned thing? Which parts are admittedly exaggerated? And so on.

Whatever it actually is—be it the extraordinary account of an unprecedented psychic investigation, or so much bullshit, or something coyly vacillating in between—*The Entity* is the story of a rather rootless woman with a couple of divorces and kids to match who suddenly finds herself in the unfortunate position of having aroused the lust of an invisible something-or-other which delights in repeatedly raping her.

It is certainly a nasty premise, and it could have been a thoroughly disgusting movie. But thanks to Sidney J. Furie of *Ipcress File* fame, who directed it, and to an oddly sincere sort of script by Frank DeFelitta, based on his novel (which is, presumably, based on some actual incident), and to the acting, by Barbara Hershey, in the really hard-to-beat-for-difficulty role of the supernaturally violated victim, the movie ends up being quite sympathetic.

Sympathetic in some ways, that is—for, like so much material going around these days, the movie offers an extremely unkind picture of

contemporary psychology and psychiatry. The sort-of hero, played quite well indeed by Ron Silver, is a psychiatrist, who, in trying to help the suffering lady, discovers that his science is useless in this case and, almost worse, that his colleagues are pigheaded and altogether wrong, both about his patient and about parapsychology.

The battle between the parapsychologists and the squarer members of their discipline is sketched rather nicely, but there is no doubt who are the good guys and who are the bad guys; and I think this sort of approach is ill-considered in a movie that's supposedly pleading for open-mindedness.

The "Entity" itself is never really explained or even properly defined, and though people in the film spend an awful lot of time chatting about what in God's name it might be, nothing like a firm conclusion is ever arrived at. Also, in spite of enormous activity on the part of everyone

present, not very much is ever done about turning the Entity from its nasty ways. By the end we're given to understand that the thing's ardor has been somewhat dampened by the rough treatment handed it during the parapsychologists' investigation, but that's all. So the movie seems rather lacking in resolution.

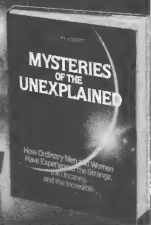
The special effects, which require that we see a naked lady raped before our very eyes by an unseen being, are beyond the pale of anything they ever asked Claude Rains to do in *The Invisible Man* (Do you suppose Claude would have done it? He *did* have a pretty nasty laugh), but Stan Winston and James Kagel, the movie's makeup team, solved the problem by developing, as far as I could figure out, a sort of magician's cabinet of a bed with Barbara Hershey's head and arms sticking out one end and maybe some other woman's legs squirming affrontedly at the other, and, in between, a plastic torso with breasts which could



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"Wagner would have found the whole premise entirely sympathetic." Supernatural warrior Lynette Harris, locked in a life-and-death struggle with her evil father, is temporarily subdued by a slave collar in *Sorceress*.

be manipulated from inside to suggest invisible fondling. Of course, that's only a guess. However it was accomplished, I think it's safe to state it is the very first such whisnits ever assembled, and it would have made a lifetime's living for an old-time carnival sideshow man.

There are a couple of questions I find nagging at me since having seen *The Entity*, particularly since the film was supposedly based on fact. (1) I am still not clear, despite a rather hurried explanation, why the parapsychologists figured you can deep-freeze an extradimensional spook (and I would really love to hear the full argument!) (2) How could the parapsychologists ever bring themselves to let loose of Barbara Hershey, since, still being squired by her monster, she could singlehandedly and once and for all prove the existence of a spectacular variety of paranormal phenomena? I suspect they'd want to keep her handy.

If *The Entity* manages to tiptoe around the pitfall of being disgusting, *Sorceress*, gleefully, does not: It wants to be disgusting, strives for it, and succeeds completely.

In its horrible way, *Sorceress* is a perfectly fascinating cinematic specimen. Imagine an old-time kiddie matinee serial starring someone like Buster Crabbe or Hopalong Cassidy, complete with the usual terrible acting, tacky sets, atrocious

photography, utterly moronic script, and most important, a childish innocence so weirdly perfect that it is difficult to believe that adults and not ten-year-olds produced and directed it; then add sex, on the exact same childish level, and you've got the feel of it.

The basic plot is weak, but Shakespeare worked with worse. An evil father makes an unholy pact granting him power in return for the ritual sacrifice of his first-born child. Unhappily for him, his wife has (1) borne him twins and (2) refused to tell him which was number one. The father kills her in an understandable fit of pique, is killed in turn, but returns to life via black magic in pursuit of his evil mission. The plot is complicated by a satyr, a viking, and the facts that the twins are female and the villain is eventually done in because his god is not as strong as his wife's god. Wagner would have found the whole premise completely sympathetic. Would that he had scripted this film.

*Sorceress* is an example of the warped time-machine or alternative-universe effect. If the old Republic serials had been given freedom from censorship and the desire to cater to the absolutely silliest in children's sexual imaginings—the sort of cruddy, confused fumbling with the subject that comes before kids have the vaguest idea what the hell's actually going on—they would have come out

with something exactly like this movie. I can't imagine what sort of an audience the producers had in mind, but if they'd released at the Coronet Theater in Evanston, Illinois, on a Saturday afternoon several decades ago, the kids would have flipped out.

It has everything. Want a homosexual joke? See the hero on a greased pole try to avoid sliding down to a sharp shaft pointing at his rear. I can hear the kids' whoops of laughter. Imagine the excited throwing of Milk Duds.

How about two beautiful twin girls who think they are boys trying to figure out why the hero's staring in that funny way at their naked breasts? Can you imagine the ruckus that would have kicked up at the old Coronet? Delighted hilarity!

And how about the scene where the one twin has an orgasm all by herself (just like in *The Entity*, by George!) when her sister's being made love to miles away by the hero, because the two twins feel "as one"? You could have heard a pin drop at the Coronet, except for all that giggling and snorting and bawdy nudging.

We'd have loved this movie, back then in Evanston. We kids wouldn't have been able to believe our good luck. I tell you, the ushers would have gone nuts trying to handle us.

Pity it was released too late. 17



## Nostalgia

# The Haunted Radio

by Ron Goulart

**B**ack in the 1930s and 1940s, when the world and many of us were younger, radio had an incredible power. It was the power to scare us silly. Not by telling us of inflation, war, and recession or by playing the latest rock hits, as it does today, but simply by filling our impressionable ears with tales of terror, horror, and worse. The horrors that old-time radio purveyed were of the worst kind because they were unseen and took advantage of our most vulnerable faculty, the imagination. A door creaked slowly open, a strange footstep dragged along a stone corridor, a madman laughed in the dark—and you saw it all in the theater of your mind.

I was no more than six or seven when I was first spooked by a radio creep show, probably an episode of the chilling *Lights Out*. We were visiting my Aunt Marie, in itself an unsettling event, and I somehow ended up alone in the same room with her hulking console radio. The show coming out of the cloth-covered speaker had to do

with a henpecked fellow who discovered that he was shrinking. Nobody, not his wife or his friends, was very sympathetic about his plight. He kept right on getting littler and littler and, finally, when his wife went in to nag him, he simply wasn't there at all. On the ride home that night I replayed that show in my mind, wondering if that could really happen to anyone. Well, not to anyone, but to me in particular. I was only a few feet high myself at the time and most anxious to grow up and not down. At that stage in my life it never occurred to me that what I'd been scared by while crouched in front of my aunt's radio was nothing more than a broadcast made by a group of people standing around in a radio studio reading from scripts. A few years later, when I was sophisticated enough to sort reality and make-believe a bit better, I still found myself being frightened by the horrors that came seeping out of my bedside radio by night.

Matter of fact, though, one of the chaps who constantly scared the beje-

sus out of me via the airwaves did it in broad daylight. Out in California, where I grew up and brooded about shrinking, *The Shadow* came on the air on Sunday afternoons. In California, where the sun shines and the birds sing all year round, he still managed to cast a dark, gloomy spell over me. The Shadow first took to the air in the summer of 1930, a mere narrator of mystery yarns in his first years. By 1937, portrayed by a young and relatively slim Orson Welles, the Shadow was a full-fledged crimefighter and ghostbreaker. Unlike the Shadow of the pulp magazines, who was illusive but palpable, the radio Shadow could become invisible at will. In everyday life he was Lamont Cranston, wealthy young man-about-town, but when it came time to go after killers, fiends, and assorted madmen, he used his "hypnotic power to cloud men's minds

Above: "He cast a dark, gloomy spell." Orson Welles during a 1938 *Mercury Theatre* broadcast. Earlier, Welles had supplied the voice of Lamont Cranston, the lead role in *The Shadow*.

so that they cannot see him." While other kilowatt sleuths of the era limited themselves to cases involving fairly prosaic criminals, the Shadow went after a bizarre collection of crazed scientists, werewolves, vampires, voodoo practitioners, reanimated corpses and, once, giant killer hounds who mewed like little kittens.

I wasn't hooked by the program until the early 1940s, by which time Welles was gone, having achieved overnight celebrity thanks to the notorious *War of the Worlds* broadcast in 1938. The actors who played the role during my listening years, talking through a filter mike when they were supposedly invisible, included Bill Johnstone and Brett Morrison, who did the role for over a decade. The show was calculated to scare you from the very first minute it hit the air. When the theme, something called *Omphale's Spinning Wheel*, came shivering out of the radio on a Phantom of the Opera organ, chills often commenced on the spine. The Shadow's opening chuckle, followed by "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!", was more than sufficient to cause an impressionable young listener to suffer an attack of gooseflesh. The very titles of the upcoming episodes, intoned by a somber announcer, were often enough to keep you huddled at your radio and afraid to move—"The Cat that Killed," "The Laughing Corpse," "Death in a Minor Key," "The Isle of the Living Dead," "Voodoo," "Drums of Doom," "The Ghost Without a Face," etc.

Thanks to the magic of electrical transcription, a good many of the original *Shadow* broadcasts have survived. You can still hear them by way of tapes and records and even on some radio stations around the country. I can still recall the disappointment I felt upon first rehearsing some of the shows that had spooked me in my youth. It was like looking up your old high school sweetheart and finding her dumpy and dimwitted. The shows that had so entranced me now sounded silly. Lamont Cranston came across as smug and fatuous, and Margot Lane, his friend and companion, was impossibly naive. Week after week, Margot, the only person who knew to whom the voice of the mysterious Shadow belonged, would walk into potentially fatal situations with the same wide-



"An Invitation which was impossible to resist . . ." *Inner Sanctum* guests Frank Mellow, Vera Allen, and Arline Blackburn ham it up in a 1949 broadcast.

eyed innocence she'd displayed the week before. Like many problem neurotics, she was incapable of learning from her own experience. "Wait here alone in this deserted tomb, Margot," Lamont would instruct her, "while I investigate out in the swamp." Or he might suggest, "Remain alone here in this dark old dungeon while I go look for a phone." She'd stay, and darned if a monster, madman, or demented ghoul wouldn't pop in in under two minutes to molest her. Seems to me now, though it didn't then, that if you were bumping into an average of two or three fiends per week, you'd eventually get jaded, the way cops and doctors do over violence. But Margot never once complained, "Jeeze, Lamont, not another escaped lunatic. This is getting to be a bore."

One old spooky show that still holds up fairly well is *I Love A Mystery*. A creation of writer-producer Carlton E. Morse (whose most successful radio program was the weekly serial *One Man's Family*), *ILAM* first took to the air early in 1939 as a five-times-a-week daytime serial. In its first few months it was heard only on the West Coast, and I am assuming I must've caught it from just about the start. KPO in San Francisco (which reached me across the Bay in my native Berkeley) was one of the five stations to run the show initially, and I have fairly strong recollections of tuning in on *I Love A Mystery* after a rough day in the first grade. *ILAM* was supposedly a detective show and dealt with three adventurers, Jack, Doc, and Reggie, who eventually formed the A-1 Detective Agency. Morse's notion of what constituted employment for private eyes differed radically from that of the average mystery writer, resulting in the three comrades tackling not only

killers and robbers but seeming werewolves, vampires, zombies, family curses and haunted castles. In doing research on the program many years later, I was surprised to find that many radio critics of the time couldn't stand *I Love A Mystery*. A *Variety* reviewer accused the show of "immature craftsmanship and the silly Rover Boy type of characterization," and *Billboard* declared, "You might love a mystery, but not me, bud." A lot they knew.

The original cast for *ILAM*, all recruited from *One Man's Family*, consisted of Michael Raffetto as Jack Packard, Walter Paterson as Reggie York and Barton Yarborough as Doc Long. Yarborough, who played Doc with a drawling Texas accent, had one of the great radio voices and went on to be Jack Webb's partner on the radio *Dragnet*. (Yarborough, who died young, appeared only in the first couple of episodes of the television version.) From 1939 until the middle of 1944, when it left the air for a spell, *I Love A Mystery* went through several format and time changes. It appeared daytime and nighttime, in fifteen-minute and half-hour segments.

While not all the *ILAM* serials were of a spooky nature, the best-remembered ones certainly were. My favorite was "Temple of Vampires." The vampire sequence was repeated in a later series, produced in the late 1940s in New York with a new cast that included Tony Randall as Reggie. This is the only version that has survived. "Temple of Vampires" takes place in Central America, in the wild jungle where the three comrades' plane has crash-landed. Along with them are a stowaway kid and a feisty young woman (played by Mercedes McCambridge, another of the great radio voices). This serial is a good example



Shadow and Mercury Theatre alumna Agnes Moorehead reading the script of "Sorry, Wrong Number," the most celebrated episode of the popular *Suspense* series.

of how to use radio to scare people. Morse, aided by his actors and the sound man, managed to build an immense ruined temple inhabited by a cult of vampires entirely out of thin air. In hearing the tapes of the surviving episodes you still get the impression you're going inside the temple with Jack, Doc and Reggie, that the place is chill and completely dark, and that giant batlike creatures are sailing high overhead.

In addition to mystery programs that occasionally dabbled in fright, there were numerous others whose sole aim was to scare you out of your senses each and every week. Among these were *Inner Sanctum*, *The Mysterious Traveler*, *The Hermit's Cave*, *Murder at Midnight*, *Escape*, *Suspense*, *The Witch's Tale*, and the aforementioned *Lights Out*, without doubt one of the scariest programs of the thirties and early forties. Begun in 1934, it originated in Chicago and was the creation of a gifted and considerably overweight man named Wyllis Cooper. When Cooper moved on to other things, including a jaunt to Hollywood to script *The Son of Frankenstein*, the writing and directing of the show were taken over by Arch Oboler. It was Oboler who took *Lights Out* to new heights, or more aptly, depths of horror. No sound-effects men in radio worked harder than his crew, who were challenged week after week to create noises which would suggest blood dripping, bones being broken, heads being severed from bodies and, on one grim occasion, a man being turned inside out. The show dealt with everything from women who became giant cats (Boris Karloff himself played the lady's unfortunate mate) to crazed husbands who shrunk their wives and wives' lovers down to the size of Bar-

bie dolls. Probably the most fondly recalled of all broadcasts was the one about the experimental chicken heart that kept growing and growing until it engulfed the entire earth.

Wyllis Cooper had a few more flings at radio. In 1947 he was back with one called *Quiet, Please*. Living up to its title, the show used a much quieter and subtler approach to horror. Cooper often made you feel uneasy rather than out-and-out frightened, and the show always seemed to take place in a world where everything was slightly out of kilter. He wrote and directed shows about time travel, invisible beings from other dimensions, aliens from other planets who drop in to local bars for a drink, ghosts and, quite frequently, about how strange love can be. The star of the show, and sometimes its only performer, was Ernest Chappell. This was about the only time that Chappell, who usually worked as a mellow-voiced announcer pitching products like Pall Mall cigarettes, was allowed to demonstrate what he could really do. Cooper's scripts were designed to hook you from the first lines. Who, for instance, could keep from listening to a story that began: "What'd you do if you heard a knock on the door some cold winter night, you went to the door and opened it, and there was a fellow about three feet high standing on your front porch in the snow?" The show, one of the few ever to give an on-the-air credit to its sound man, only survived two seasons. The very last episode was entitled "Quiet, Please" and dealt with the end of the world.

Two much more successful creepy programs were *Inner Sanctum* and *Suspense*. The creation of the enterprising Himan Brown, *Inner Sanctum* was first heard in 1941. Although the horror yarns featured were nothing exceptional, the packaging was. When the creaking door groaned open at the start of each broadcast, it issued an invitation which was nigh impossible to resist and you had to cross the threshold. In fact, you dared not stay outside, since Raymond, your host, was not the sort of chap you wanted to annoy. The role was played initially by Raymond Edward Johnson, whose juicy reading of the show's opening copy made the corny, macabre jokes tolerable: "Before we begin tonight, I'd like to give you a word of advice. If you should ever

walk through a cemetery at midnight and come face-to-face with a transparent personality floating above a tombstone, don't be frightened. After all, you can see right through him. Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh." The *Inner Sanctum* door creaked open regularly for over a decade.

*Suspense*, which came along in 1942, was a classier operation. During its fourteen-year run it was produced and directed by some of the best men in radio, most notably William Spier (who also produced the *Sam Spade* show), Elliott Lewis and William N. Robson. During the season when it was sponsored, *Suspense* was able to afford casting a great many movie notables. Rita Hayworth, Cary Grant, Joseph Cotten, Edward G. Robinson, Jack Benny and Robert Taylor (in a story about lycanthropy) all took turns at the mike. The most celebrated *Suspense* story ever was "Sorry, Wrong Number," written by Lucille Fletcher and starring Agnes Moorehead (the first lady to play Margot Lane on the air). The very first time this show about a lonely bedridden woman who accidentally overhears what may be her own murder being plotted over the telephone was broadcast, there was an extra element of suspense added. Most radio shows were done live, and the actor playing the killer in this one fluffed his last lines, considerably muting the effect of the whole play. Lucille Fletcher has said that hundreds of upset listeners phoned CBS in protest. This only added to the effect of the radio play and it was broadcast no less than seven more times, always with Agnes Moorehead. (Moorehead's performance in "Sorry, Wrong Number" earned her the starring role in *Twilight Zone's* "The Invaders"—a role in which there were no spoken lines.) The format of the show changed over the years, and for a time there was even a Raymond-like narrator called the Man in Black. Later on, an announcer opened the show by promising us "a tale well calculated to keep you in ... suspense!"

But once again I've run out of space. And without being able to talk about *Escape*, a CBS show that broadcast adaptations of horror tales by H.G. Wells, John Collier, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Algernon Blackwood. Nor can I mention the show wherein an enormous, loathsome ... 17

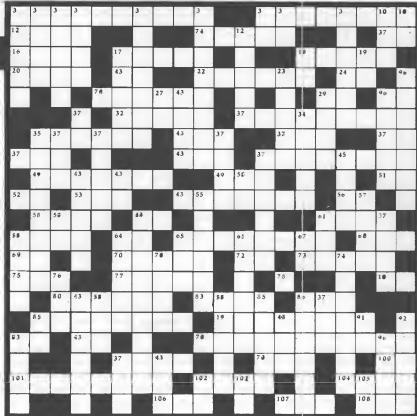
## TZ Trivia

## Crossword #1

Here's a puzzle to test the knowledge of all you TZ experts. For puzzlers without a cum laude degree in *Twilight Zone* trivia, the most difficult clues are bolstered by references to the TZ issues containing the necessary information. The solution appears on page 44.

## ACROSS

1. When Ms. Francis was just another dummy; two words (TZ June '81)
7. Mr. Bemis, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Dingle
12. *Life*, to Billy Mumy's Anthony (TZ November '81)
13. "And each separate dying cast its ghost upon the floor."—Poe
15. The royal or editorial
16. This monarch won't return (TZ July '81)
17. The heat produced by a slot machine (TZ May '81)
18. Quite small
20. Liveliness and grace
21. Dorothy's Auntie
22. Where the *Shadow* lies (TZ March '82)
24. mr. cummings
26. Can man Johnson
29. Angel of Mercy
30. What Art Carney, as the Meek would say (TZ January '82)
32. What *Genie* inspires (TZ May '82)
33. Joe Caswell's end (TZ June '81)
35. What Walter Bedeker used to *Escape* his fate (TZ April '81)
38. Sun-toasted
40. Acquired
41. Its L.A. branch keeps Serling film; initials
42. He led China's Great March, 1948
43. Rocker Brian
44. Rod's hometown
45. His films are all tingers
49. You don't \_\_\_\_\_!
51. Keenan's pop
52. \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_ Black
53. *The \_\_\_\_\_ Man in the Cave*
54. *Flight 33's* journey (TZ August '81)
56. She/it was found in a bottle; abbrev.
58. Ms. Blyth was queen here (TZ May-June '83)
60. Sun god, in Cairo
61. Hearing-impaired
63. Bulbs light up for this in cartoons
64. *Perchance \_\_\_\_\_ Dream*
65. Author, *A World of His Own* (TZ March-April '83)
68. One \_\_\_\_\_ the Angels
69. Exist
70. Persoff's vehicle in *Judgment Night* (TZ April '81)
72. *I \_\_\_\_\_ the Night* ...
73. Carol, Jobie, or Senator Howard
75. U.S. taxer
77. \_\_\_\_\_ Ship
78. Just one
79. Accomplish
80. The drink one takes from a *Certain Fountain*; two words (TZ October '82)
83. Trigonometric function
86. Impish god
88. Finds
89. What the chef did in Stanley Ellin's "Specialty of the House;" two words
93. Nightmare \_\_\_\_\_ a Child



94. Baseball league; abbrev.
95. What Ms. Miles saw at the bus station; two words (TZ May '81)
97. Liquid concoction
99. Suffix: chemical compounds containing hydroxyls
100. Audio-visual; abbrev.
101. He wrote of living dolls, howling men, and radios that take you back
102. Dr. Frankenstein's aide
104. The element in TZ's hour-long pilot
106. Where Edward Binns shot his arrow (TZ May '81)
107. *Nervous Man* \_\_\_\_\_ Four Dollar Room; two words
108. One house of Congress; abbrev.

## DOWN

1. Ms. Moorhead or the computer (TZ January-February '83)
2. Outwit
3. Melodic
4. That same old garden
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Pallbearer; two words
6. What Kanamit chefs do; two words (TZ January '82)
7. King's state; abbrev.
8. Suffix: one that does
9. Within the bounds of good manners; clothed
10. Liz Montgomery was one (TZ October '81)
11. Who laughs last
14. *The Big, Tall* boxer (TZ June '81)
17. What the zookeeper does for the bears
18. Serling's "\_\_\_\_\_ Most Memorable Christmas" (TZ January '82)
19. Prefix: one more time
23. Episode in which three spacemen get their wish (TZ May '81)
25. Give in
27. Prefix: yet again
28. Expect this to be early
29. Actress \_\_\_\_\_ Lee, in *A Short Drink* ... (TZ October '82)
30. Where to put the Piano (TZ January '82)
31. Pa's wife
34. *The Lonely* one (TZ May-June '83)
35. Who's Coming? (TZ February '82)
36. Parisian law
37. His name is *Simon* (TZ September '82)
39. One who pokes around
44. Solar \_\_\_\_\_
45. \_\_\_\_\_ Wander ...
47. Science fictioner William F. \_\_\_\_\_
48. Writes notes in TZ; abbrev.
50. General Harper in *The Last Flight*; initials (TZ May '81)
55. The head to revisit (TZ November '81)
57. Where to keep the cash
59. In other words
60. *The Dummy*'s man (TZ February '82)
61. Your basic information; initials
62. His world was incredible (TZ June '82)
63. As before
64. English-style architecture
65. Thin padding
66. Earl of Jess-Elle
67. Delivery man, for short
71. A formal promise
74. Alien gourmet (TZ January '82)
76. Respectful address, in Tokyo
81. Launched; two words
82. Clarke's berserk computer
84. \_\_\_\_\_ the Body Electric; two words
85. This is wrong
86. This one or one unknown (TZ January '82)
87. Pal, in Paris
88. *The Four* of \_\_\_\_\_
90. Book; abbrev.
91. North America; abbrev.
92. This one is made up of phantoms (TZ October '82)
93. She serves drinks 20,000 feet up (TZ July-August '83)
96. A \_\_\_\_\_ of Pool!
97. What Richard Christian is to Richard
98. Ms. Hagen
102. Annum; abbrev.
103. All right
105. Where \_\_\_\_\_ Everybody?

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## TWILIGHTZONE

In memory of Rod Serling, whose professional career was launched when he became a prizewinner in a nationwide writing contest. This year we're seeking stories about an intrusion of the supernatural or unearthly into a well-drawn contemporary American setting.

As in previous years, the contest is limited to previously unpublished writers.

Maximum story length: two thousand words.

Winning stories will be published in  
TZ's Third Anniversary Issue,  
March-April 1984

### Rules

1. All entries must be original works of fiction, two thousand words or less. There is no minimum length.
2. The contest is open only to those who have never had fiction published professionally; all those who have received monetary payment for a piece of published fiction of whatever length (but not including poetry and plays) are ineligible.
3. Entries must be typewritten, with the writer's name, address, and telephone number on the first page. All entries to be considered must include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of the manuscript. Please note that we cannot acknowledge entries on receipt.
4. Writers may submit one entry only.
5. All non-prize-winning entries will nonetheless be considered for publication in the magazine.
6. The contest closes September 1, 1983. Mail entries to:  
Story Contest, TZ Publications, Inc.  
800 Second Ave., New York, NY 10017

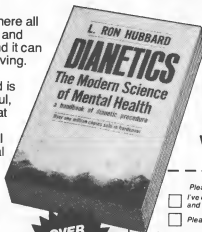
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## PROFILE: DONALD SUTHERLAND

JAMES VERNIERE TALKS WITH THE VERSATILE ACTOR WHO PAID HIS DUES . . . AND HAD FUN DOING IT.

Donald Sutherland is one of those chameleonesque actors who can change colors to fit many and various roles. He is such an adept craftsman that many moviegoers fail to recognize that he is the same actor who plays Hawkeye in Robert Altman's *M\*A\*S\*H*, the celebrated lover in Fellini's *Così una*, and the tormented Colvin Jerret in Robert Redford's *Ordinary People*. What most people remember about Donald Sutherland is that when he plays weirdos, as he did in films like *The Dirty Dozen*, *Joanna*, *Start the Revolution Without Me*, *Alex in Wonderland*, *The Day of the Locust*, and *Eye of the Needle*, he plays them very, very well. So well that he is very touchy on the subject ("I don't want people thinking of me as a floke," he said).

Born in New Brunswick, Canada, the son of a Goodyear tire salesman and a mathematics teacher, Donald Sutherland moved to England in 1959 to pursue a career in acting. He enrolled in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, touring the countryside with provincial repertory companies before establishing himself as a film actor. Although many believe the tall, soft-spoken actor made his film debut in Robert Aldrich's *The Dirty Dozen* in 1967, the truth is that Sutherland's first film roles were parts in low-budget horror movies.



**TZ:** How is it that a classically trained actor started his film career in movies like *Castle of the Living Dead*?  
**Sutherland:** Unlike theater, in which an actor can play a multitude of roles, a young actor who is just starting out is usually typecast by his looks. The only roles I seemed to be offered were homicidal artists.

**TZ:** What was *Castle of the Living Dead* like?

**Sutherland:** All I remember is that I played a dual role. I was a witch and a soldier and in the last scene I have a fight with myself.

**TZ:** Then in 1965 you made an Amicus film called *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors*, which was directed by Freddie Francis.

**Sutherland:** Yes, in those days actors in England worked for the most part in the horror genre because those were the only films being made regularly. In that one I played a newlywed husband who discovers that his wife is a vampire. Standard stuff, but lots of fun, and at the time

## THE BIG TIME



## Tempo

Laurie Anderson blends a twilight zone with pop

By Lynn Van Maire  
Photo: Chris

**W**ITH THE success of "to Superman," a four-hour wave style single that topped up the best-selling charts in Britain and long ago, performance artist Laurie Anderson crossed over from avant-garde "art" to the mainstream.

Laurie Anderson  
A multimedia performance of her "United States 1" at the University of California, Berkeley, 1982. (Photo: J. S. Brown)

red and black more overlaid with a grid pattern repeated in many of her videos. As the figure pulled and elongated, the design formed in the crowd and a white

Dozens of readers sent us the above headline around a year ago (it's from the *Chicago Tribune*), but we never ran it in *Etc.* because, frankly, we didn't know who In God's name Laurie Anderson was. (And what, pray tell, was a "performance artist"?) However, it now seems that everyone else in the world does know who she is, and *TZ* film chronicler Jim Verniere just phoned to say that a lengthy musical composition of hers will be featured in *The Keep*, the horror movie previewed in our last issue (and rescheduled for release this fall). So congrats, Laurie, on being catapulted out of the Twilight Zone into the Big Time.

I was grateful for any work I could get. In the beginning I think I averaged about fifteen-hundred dollars a year as an actor.

**TZ:** Your next foray into the horror genre was in a Hammer film written by Richard Matheson called *Fanatic* [American title: *Diel Die! My Darling!*]. What was it like working with Tallulah Bankhead?

**Sutherland:** I remember my first day on that set. I was in the dressing room when I walked Miss Bankhead without a stitch of clothing. She said, "What's the matter with you? Haven't you ever seen a blonde before?" I played a demented gardener in that one.

**TZ:** You didn't make another genre film until *Don't Look Now* in 1973, a film that has since become a cult classic. Why wasn't it well received when it opened?

**Sutherland:** Paramount killed it, and so did *The Exorcist*, which had opened at about the same time. Part of the reason Paramount didn't support it is because Warren [Beatty] was not terribly happy with Julie [Christie].

**TZ:** Was that because of the torrid, almost X-rated love scene you and Miss Christie had in the film?

**Sutherland:** That's an old boys' intrigue that we won't get into.

**TZ:** Given the general failure of sequels and remakes, why did you agree to do an update of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*?

**Sutherland:** Because the script was good and the director was a man of vision. Those are the only reasons I ever work in a film. My career has been designed for someone who wants to work with directors. I've always worked with the most interesting directors or the best leading ladies. So far I've been very lucky.



# FAMOUS LAST WORDS

[Editor's note: The following piece, by Robert M. Price, is reprinted from his privately published magazine *Crypt of Cthulhu*, devoted to the life and works of H.P. Lovecraft. Look for Price's history of *The Necronomicon*. Lovecraft's fabled book of magic lore, in a future TZ.]

As fans of horror-fantasy fiction, all of us are called on from time to time to swallow greater or lesser implausibilities. After all, why quibble if Wilmarth can quote verbatim entire letters from memory in "The Whisperer in Darkness"? Even gross physiological impossibilities such as the "change" undergone by the Innsmouth folk from mammals to amphibians can be swept under the rug with only a wink. And the chances of Wilbur Whateley's ever finding clothes that fit? What the heck! But at some point we really have to draw the line. And what more needful place than at a particular device for ending stories? We refer, of course, to those which break off in midscreeam with the narrator's grisly doom. There is nothing untoward about such a device *per se*, but these narrators seem to be as addicted to writing as we are to reading. They perish pen in hand, their death rattle committed to paper.

A few examples will demonstrate how horror shades unwittingly into humor:

"The end is near. I hear a noise at the door, as of some immense slippery body lumbering against it. It shall not find me. God, *that*

hand! The window! The window!"

—H.P. Lovecraft, "Dagon."

"Not long to go now; even the stone walls shudder to the monstrous weight pressing upon them—The window!—Merciful God, that FACE! Can anything that lives be so huge—"

—Lin Carter, "The Dreams in the House at Weir."

"But now—something—Great God! Wings! What beings at the window! al lat Hastur fhtagn . . . !"

—August Derleth, "The House on Curwen Street."

"It is as if the walls of the house fell away, as if the street too, were gone, and far a fog—something in that watery fog, like a giant frog with tentacles—like a—Great God! What horror! al lat Hastur!"

—August Derleth, "The Watcher from the Sky."

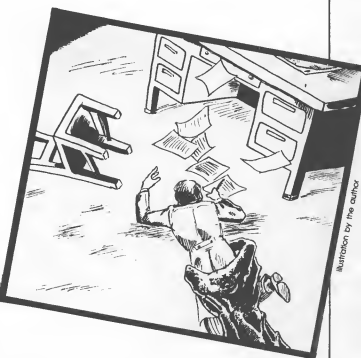
"How hard it is for me to fight, while all the while it is commanding me to put this down my pen and tear this up! But I will fight—I must, until I can tell you what the creature told me—what it plans to let loose on the world when it has me utterly enslaved. . . . I will tell. . . . I can't think. . . . will write it. . . . damn you stop. . . . Nal! Don't do that! Get your hands—"

—Robert Bloch, "The Mannikin."

"Black marks two feet wide, but they aren't just marks. What they really are is *fingerprint!*! The door is busting a—"

—Robert Bloch, "Notebook Found in a Deserted House."

". . . . too late—cannot help self—black paws



materialize—am dragged away toward the cellar.

—H.P. Lovecraft, "The Diary of Alonzo Typer."

Are we supposed to imagine poor Typer writing this onto the floorboards he is being dragged across? No, because according to the story's "frame," the narrative is all contained in his diary. And this is the problem with all these story endings. They are part of *written documents*. And even if someone were writing when some horror came upon him, he would drop quill or Bic long before these narrators do.

The silliest of the bunch, and therefore the best example, is the ending of Frank Belknap Long's "The Hounds of Tindalos":

"God, they are breaking through! They are breaking through! Smoke is pouring from the corners of the wall. Their tongues—ahhh—"

Ahhh indeed.

There is really quite a simple expedient available to

any writer who still wishes to use this hackneyed device. So far as we can tell, August Derleth is among the few to use it, in a scene from "The Shuttered Room": "Oh, that hand! That turr'ble arm! Gawd! That face . . . !" What is the difference? This frightened voice is being heard over the phone. The poor devil is calling for help, but it is too late. Now how much imagination could this have taken? Not much, actually, since Derleth stole the scene wholesale from Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror": "Those who took down their receivers heard a fright-mad voice shriek out, 'Help, oh, my Gawd! . . . .'" A telephone is not even the only way to present this; there are always tape recorders and dictaphones. It can't be that difficult to work them into the narrative. From now on, let's hope that horror-fantasy writers will show a little more . . . but wait! Good God! What's that coming out of the garbage disposal—*eeeyeah!*! *glub, glub, . . .*

# H.P. Lovecraft



TZ JOINS AMERICA'S  
ACKNOWLEDGED MASTER  
OF COSMIC HORROR  
FOR A GENTLEMANLY  
TALK ABOUT DREAMS,  
NIGHTMARES, AND  
THE DELIGHTS  
OF PROVIDENCE,  
RHODE ISLAND.

Interviewer Peter Cannon reports:

The New England foliage was magnificent when, in the fall of 1936, I journeyed to Providence, Rhode Island, to visit Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), the greatest American author of horror and fantasy since Edgar Allan Poe. In his day, Lovecraft was perhaps the most popular contributor to *Weird Tales*, the legendary pulp magazine that published the bulk of his work. In the best of his brooding, atmospheric fiction, he avoided the ghostly clichés and succeeded in putting supernatural dread on a truly cosmic scale. His groundbreaking stories, particularly those of the so-called "Cthulhu Mythos" cycle, and his own personal generosity and wisdom, have inspired a host of younger writers, both during his lifetime and today.

I found Mr. Lovecraft, just as he describes the hero of his story "The Hound of the Dork," living on "the upper floor of a venerable dwelling in a grossy court off College Street—on the crest of the great eastward hill near the Brown University campus and behind the marble John Hay Library. It was a cozy and fascinating place, in a little garden oasis of villagelike antiquity where huge, friendly cats sunned themselves atop a convenient shed. The square Georgian house had a monitor roof, classic doorway with fan carving, small-paned windows, and all the other earmarks of early nineteenth-century workmanship. Inside were six-paneled doors, wide floorboards, a curving colonial staircase, white Adam-period mantels, and a rear set of rooms three steps below the general level. (His) study, a large southwest chamber, overlooked the front garden on one side, while its west windows—before one of which he had his desk—faced off from the brow of the hill and commanded a splendid view of the lower town's outspread roofs and of the mystical sunsets that flamed behind them."

TZ: You certainly have a beautiful view of the city.

HPL: Yes, at sunset I often sit at my desk and gaze dreamily off at the outspread west—the dark towers of Memorial Hall just below (*pointing*), the Georgian courthouse belfry, the lofty pinnacles of the downtown section, and that shimmering, spire-crowned mound in the distance.

TZ: You've written, "I am Providence, and Providence is myself," and your fondness for your native city shows in such tales as "The Shunned House," "The Call of Cthulhu," and the recent "Haunter of the Dark." Just how important is it for you to live here?

HPL (*after a pause*): I have found from experience that Providence is the only place where I can be content. The soil and air are in my blood and cell-structure, and I have come to recognize myself as of the type that cannot live apart from its sources and background—in a word, the essential provincial as opposed to the cosmopolitan.

TZ: What is it about the place that you especially like?

HPL: One comes to love all the old lanes and the old buildings: the 1761 Colony House, the four old churches dating from betwixt 1775 and 1816, the exquisite private homes with dates between 1770 and 1825, and the vivid, glamorous waterfront with its rotting wharves and archaic lines of gambrel roofs and dark alleys. That is Old Providence, the town that gave me birth and in which I have lived all but two of my forty-six years.

TZ: Yet for all your devotion to this town, your tastes in literature—and even in spelling—mark you as an anglophile. What sort of life would you have preferred?

HPL: To have been born in Devonshire in 1690, just two hundred years before I actually saw the light in Providence. I would have lived as a country squire of liberal tastes, visited London occasionally, and been a Tory in politics. If living at the time of the American war, I would have advocated liberal measures with the colonies, but stern military measures once they actually repudiated their rightful sovereign.

TZ: As far as your own stories are concerned, however, you seem to prefer New England to the old. Take "Pickman's Model," for example—

HPL: One of my very tamest and mildest effusions.

TZ: There are some who'd disagree! At any rate, the story has a detailed description of Boston's North End. Does such a quaint, colonial neighborhood actually exist?

HPL (*nodding*): This region used to be a good deal more picturesque than it is now, and the sinister alley described in the story was more or less literally

based on a real alley which zigzagged peculiarly up from Commercial Street to Charter Street, not so very far from Copp's Hill. I was tremendously mortified in 1927 when I tried to show the district to one of my guests, and found the whole scene torn down for two blocks around! I imagine the building inspectors must have found those ancient houses as sinister as I did—albeit with a different sort of perception. That is the perennial grief of an architectural antiquarian: in a city as large as Providence or Boston, something quaint is always being demolished in the interest of alleged progress.

TZ: You succeed in imbuing your New England locales with a certain air of wonder. In that sense, I suppose, you're not strictly realistic.

HPL: Yes, my New England is a dream New England—the familiar scene with certain lights and shadows heightened just enough to merge it with things beyond the world. That, I fancy, is the problem of everyone working in an artistic medium—to take a known setting and restore to it, in vivid freshness, all the accumulated wonder and beauty it has produced in its long continuous history.

TZ: You seem to be acutely sensitive to visual beauty.

HPL: I am above all else *scenic* and *architectural* in my tastes. It might quite justly be said that the only genuine motivating element in my existence is a quest for novel adventures in landscape, panorama, and lighting effects: new combinations of hill and river-bend and wooded valley, or new effect of slanting late-afternoon sunlight over the spires, roofs, and terraced gardens of some marvelous city I have never seen before.

TZ: Does man have a place in this aesthetic picture?

HPL (*shakes his head*): The cosmos is simply a perpetual rearrangement of electrons which is constantly seething, as it always has been and always will be. Our tiny globe and puny thoughts are but one momentary incident in its eternal mutation—so that the life, aims, and thoughts of mankind are of the utmost triviality and ridiculousness.

TZ: A rather bleak philosophy! And yet your own enthusiasms are obviously quite strong. What were your earliest interests?

HPL: At the age of two I was absolutely meter-mad! I could not read, but would repeat any poem of simple sort with unflinching cadence.

TZ: You mean things like nursery rhymes?

HPL (*nods, smiling*): Mother Goose was my principal classic.

TZ: And you finally learned to read—

HPL: In 1894.

TZ: When you were four years old.

HPL (*nods*): I was able to read fluently,

and was a tireless student of the dictionary, never allowing a word to slip by me without ascertaining its meaning. The mellowed tomes of the family library became my complete world. I read everything, understood a little, and imagined more. I lived mostly in a medieval world of imagination.

TZ: I gather that you lost your father when you were quite young. What memories do you have of him?

HPL: My image of him is vague. I can just recall his extremely precise and cultivated British voice and his immaculate black morning-coat and vest, ascot tie, and wing collars—left all too immaculate by his early illness and death.

TZ: Who took care of you afterward, aside from your mother?

HPL: My beloved grandfather, Whipple Van Buren Phillips, became the center of my entire universe.

TZ: What was he like?

HPL: A man of culture and extensive travel. His acquaintance with all the wonders of Europe, which he had seen at first hand, made me feel almost as if I had seen them myself.

In the spring of 1904 he passed away as the result of an apoplectic stroke, and I was never afterward the same. His death brought financial disaster, besides its more serious grief. My mother and I were forced to vacate the beautiful estate at 454 Angell Street, and to enter the less spacious abode at 598, three blocks eastward.

TZ: Where shortly afterward, I understand, you also lost your maternal grandmother.

HPL (*nods*): Her death plunged the household into a gloom from which I never fully recovered. I began to have nightmares of the most hideous description, peopled with *things* which I called "night-gaunts." In dreams they were wont to whirl me through space at a sickening rate of speed, fretting and impelling me with their detestable tridents.

TZ: Where do you suppose you got the idea for these creatures?

HPL: Perhaps from an edition de luxe of *Paradise Lost* with illustrations by Dore, which I discovered one day in the east parlor.

TZ: You depict this night-gaunt image vividly in one of your *Fungi from Yuggoth* sonnets. Did the mad sorcerer referred to in your stories, Abdul Alhazred, have a childhood source as well? And what of your fictional book of spells, the *Necronomicon*?

HPL: The name "Abdul Alhazred" is one which some adult devised for me when I was five years old and eager to be an Arab after reading the Arabian Nights. Years later I thought it would be fun to use it as the name of a forbidden-book author. The name *Necronomicon* occurred to me in the course of a dream.

TZ: What did you do for fun as a child?

HPL: My leading pleasures were books, pictures, walks in ancient places, museums, writing, music (until my violin experience soured me on the latter), and such playing with other children as involved the making-up and acting-out of plots.

TZ: So you did get along with other children socially.

HPL (nodding): I was not, like many neurotic and bookish children, essentially solitary by nature. I liked to play war and Indian and policeman and railway man and all that, though I could not abide a mere game which involved no imagination. Baseball, football and all that simply left me cold.

TZ: And physically—

HPL: I didn't inherit a very good set of nerves, since near relatives on both sides of my ancestry were prone to headaches, nerve-exhaustion, and breakdowns. My own headaches and nervous irritability and exhaustion-tendency begin as early as my existence itself. I got along excellently after a time ... (frowning) except for nervousness and headaches, and bad digestion, and heart and kidney trouble, and poor eyesight, and dizziness, and abnormally ready fatigue.

TZ: But outside of all this—

HPL (laughs): Yeah, outside of this I was quite okay!

TZ: How about your schooling?

HPL: School had to be irregular. In 1908 I should have entered Brown University, but the broken state of my health rendered the idea absurd.

TZ: As an adult, did your health improve?

HPL: My health improved vastly and rapidly, though without any ascertainable cause, about 1920-21.

TZ: Which would put you in your early thirties. But obviously none of this prevented you from doing a good deal of writing all along. In fact, weren't you first published as a teenager?

HPL (nods): In 1906.

TZ: What sort of piece was it?

HPL: A brief attack on astrology published in the *Providence Sunday Journal*. In August, 1906, I commenced a series of monthly astronomical articles in the *Providence Tribune*, and began to contribute miscellany to the *Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner*, a country paper which my mother's family had taken years before, when they lived at



HPL at twenty-five.

Greene.

TZ: What was behind this early interest in science?

HPL: Cosmic mystery was always my goal, in one way or another.

TZ: Then why the switch to writing?

HPL: I saw that the pen would get me a bigger slice of it than would the more exacting telescope, mathematical formula, or laboratory.

TZ: What was your first published story?

HPL: "Herbert West—Reanimator."

TZ: Oh, yes, the 1922 serial for that short-lived magazine called *Home Brew*. How does it strike you now?

HPL: "Herbert West—Reanimator" represents my poorest work—stuff done to order for a vulgar magazine, and written down to the herd's level.

TZ: But a year later you found a more congenial outlet—

HPL (nods): *Weird Tales*—

TZ: —which, I understand, initially accepted five of your stories at once. What's this about your being offered its editorship?

HPL: The new owner at that time, Henneberger, said it would be "right in my line," and he wanted to know if I would consider moving to Chicago to edit it. I could hardly contemplate moving to ugly, modern, crassly repellent Chicago without a shiver. My wife wouldn't have minded living in Chicago at all, but it is colonial atmosphere which supplies my very breath of life.

TZ: You mentioned your wife, Sonia Greene, a friend in the amateur press. Why didn't things work out?

HPL (after a pause): I mistook superficial for basic congeniality. Small similarities did not, as expected, grow greater; nor did small differences, as expected, grow less. Instead, the reverse process occurred in both cases—aided, no doubt, by financial insecurity.

TZ: And so, after two years, you broke up.

HPL (nods): Without real blame or even bitterness on either side. The Superior Court of Providence County was permitted to exercise its corrective and divisive function, and the old gentleman was ceremoniously reenthroned in a dour celibate dignity. My household is now presided over by my sole surviving aunt—my only close relative.

TZ: If you don't mind my asking, what is your attitude toward sex? Before you were married, for instance, did you and your fiancée ... (Clears his throat.)

HPL: In these transitional days the luckiest persons are those of sluggish eroticism who can cast aside the whole muddled business and watch the squirming of the primitive majority from the sidelines with ironic detachment. I never thought premarital experience worth the attendant ignominiousness, and doubt very much if I was the loser thereby.

TZ: During the brief period of your marriage in the mid-twenties, you lived in New York City. How did you view your one home away from Providence?

HPL: If you want to know what I think of New York, read "He."

TZ: Could you elaborate a bit?

HPL (opening an issue of *Weird Tales* and reading aloud): "My coming to New York had been a mistake; for whereas I had looked for poignant wonder and inspiration in the teeming labyrinths of ancient streets that twist endlessly from forgotten courts and squares and waterfronts to courts and squares and waterfronts equally forgotten, and in the Cyclopean modern towers and pinnacles that rise blackly Babylonian under waning moons, I had found instead only a sense of horror and oppression which threatened to master, paralyze, and annihilate me."

TZ: Has your attitude mellowed any with time? How does that period appear to you now?

HPL: Age brings reminiscences. With all the drawbacks, that era of 1925 is not without its idyllic glamor. The long informal sessions at various ren-

Courtesy John Hay Library, Brown University

devious—the complete disregard of the clock—the spirited weekly meetings—the then burning issues and no less burning arguments—the bookshops and the tours of exploration—surely they glow with a golden light in the perspective of eleven long years. That age was the last of youth for our generation, the last years in which we could feel that curious sense of the importance of things, and that vague, heartening spur of adventurous expectancy, which distinguish the morning and noon from the afternoon of life.

TZ: Have your political views changed as well? You once turned out right-wing essays in your amateur journal *The Conservative*, but I hear you're now sympathetic to President Roosevelt and his policies.

HPL: I used to be a hide-bound Tory simply for traditional and antiquarian reasons—and because I had never done any real *thinking* on civics and industry and the future. The Depression jolted me out of my lethargy and led me to reexamine the facts of history in the light of unsentimental scientific analysis; and it was not long before I realized what an ass I had been. The liberals at whom I used to laugh were the ones who were right, for they were living at the present while I had been living in the past. They had been using science whilst I had been using romantic antiquarianism. At last I began to recognize something of the way in which capitalism works—always piling up concentrated wealth and impoverishing the bulk of the population until the strain becomes so intolerable as to force artificial reform.

Well, I was converted at last, and in the spring of 1931 took the left-wing side of social and political arguments for the first time in a long life. So today I am a New Dealer—perfectly conscious of the waste and bungling necessarily connected with experimentation, but convinced that open-minded experiment with all its faults is vastly better than efficient and economical progress toward the wrong goal.

TZ: You mustn't think much of the Republicans at this point.

HPL: How can one regard seriously a frightened, greedy, nostalgic huddle of tradesmen and lucky idlers who shut their eyes to history and science, steel their emotions against decent human sympathy, cling to sordid and provincial ideals exalting sheer acquisitiveness and condoning artificial hardship

for the non-materially shrewd, dwell smugly and sentimentally in a distorted dream-cosmos of outmoded phrases and principles and attitudes based on the bygone agricultural-handicraft world, and revel in (consciously or unconsciously) mendacious assumptions, such as the notion that *real liberty* is synonymous with the single detail of *unrestricted economic license*, utterly contrary to fact and without the slightest foundation in human experience? Intellectually, the Republican idea deserves the tolerance and respect one gives to the dead.

TZ: Before our readers take this for a political journal, we'd better get back to your writing career. Who would you say was your biggest influence?

HPL: Poe has probably influenced me more than any other one person. If I have ever been able to approximate his kind of thrill, it is only because he himself paved the way by creating a whole atmosphere and method which lesser men can follow with relative ease. Poe is indisputably the one great literary figure of the United States, and is likely to remain so. If I ever acquire any kind of fortune, one of my first extravagances will be some genuine Poe autograph letters.

TZ: Which tales of his are your favorites?

HPL: Poe's supreme tale is, to me, "The Fall of the House of Usher." Second comes "Ligeia," and of course "Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" is full of breathless anticipation up to the last hideous cataclysm. "Ms. Found in a Bottle" and the later parts of "Arthur Gordon Pym" have a strange and potent aura of mystery and expectancy, and there are touches in "Metzengerstein" which few besides Poe could achieve. In the realm of sheer, somber, prose-poetry, uniting horror and beauty, nothing could excel "The Masque of the Red Death," "Silence, a Fable," and "Shadow, a Parable."

TZ: Other influences?

HPL: Dunsany has influenced me more than anyone else except Poe. His rich language, his cosmic point of view, his remote dream-world, and his exquisite sense of the fantastic, all appeal to me more than anything else in modern literature. My first encounter with him, in the autumn of 1919, gave an immense impetus to my writing—perhaps the greatest it has ever had.

TZ: How would you rank your own work?

HPL: I make no claim to membership in the first rank of weird writers—a rank represented by Poe among the dead, and by Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, Walter de la Mare, Lord Dunsany, and Montague Rhodes James among the living.

TZ: How do you rate the contemporary authors you just mentioned?

HPL: It is safe to say that Blackwood is the greatest living weirdist despite vast unevenness and a poor prose style. Machen, with an incomparably superior style, comes next. Dunsany—with the greatest style of all—could probably top them all if he would stick to the relatively serious vein manifest in *A Dreamer's Tale*.

My ideal weird author would be a kind of synthesis of the atmospheric intensity of Poe, the cosmic range and luxuriant invention of Dunsany, the bottom-touching implications of Machen, and the breathlessly convincing unrealism of Blackwood.

TZ: What do you consider the greatest single weird tale?

HPL: It is my firm opinion that Blackwood's longish short story "The Willows" is the greatest weird tale ever written, with Machen's "The White People" as a good second. Little is said—everything is suggested.

TZ: If you don't consider yourself among the top writers, just where do you see your own place?

HPL: Some of my stuff—and that of other *Weird Tales* hacks—may be as good as the poorer work of Blackwood and the other big-timers, since all weird writers seem to be singularly uneven. But nobody in the *Weird Tales* group has ever approached the best work of the standard fantasists. It is enough for me if I can make a showing amongst the smaller fry represented in the cheap magazines. (A pause.) The trouble with most of my stuff is that it falls between two stools—the vile magazine type subconsciously engrafted on my method by *Weird Tales* association, and the real story. My tales are not bad enough for cheap editors, nor good enough for standard acceptance and recognition.

TZ: What, then, is your reason for writing stories?

HPL: To give myself the satisfaction of visualizing more clearly and detailedly and stably the vague, elusive, fragmentary impressions of wonder, beauty, and adventurous expectancy which are conveyed to me by certain sights,

ideas, occurrences, and images encountered in art and literature.

TZ: Why in particular the weird?

HPL: I choose weird stories because they suit my inclinations best—one of my strongest and most persistent wishes being to achieve, momentarily, the illusion of some strange suspension or violation of the galling limitations of time, space, and natural law which forever imprison us.

TZ: Can you elaborate a bit on your compositional methods?

HPL: I write slowly, correct so extensively that my rough drafts are legible to no one but myself (and sometimes not to me!), and never hesitate to change the early part of the work when later developments call for different antecedents.

TZ: Do you ever compose on the typewriter?

HPL (*shaking his head*): Nothing exhausts and exasperates me more completely than a session at the machine, and I never use the thing except under compulsion. I couldn't possibly write anything important on a typewriter.

TZ: Do you make much use of dreams in your writing?

HPL: Occasionally—but not often—a dream of mine forms a usable fictional plot. Such was the genesis of "The Statement of Randolph Carter." Many of my *Fungi from Yuggoth* are actual dreams versified.

TZ: You seem to minimize both character and plot in your tales.

HPL (*nods*): I have an absolute minimum of plot in the formal, academic sense, and depend almost entirely upon atmosphere. Atmosphere, not action, is the great desideratum of weird fiction. Indeed, all that a wonder story can ever be is a vivid picture of a certain type of human mood. Ordinary tales about a castle ghost or old-fashioned werewolf are merely so much junk.

TZ: Let's discuss your own work—"The Outsider," for example, one of your more popular early tales.

HPL: To my mind it is too glibly mechanical in its effect, and almost comic in the bombastic pomposity of its language. It represents my literal though unconscious imitation of Poe at its very height.

TZ: Aren't you being a little hard on yourself?

HPL: I'll concede that it has the single merit of an original point of view.

TZ: How about some of your other early tales?

HPL: "The Horror at Red Hook," "He," "The Moon-Bog," "The White Ship," "From Beyond," "The Tree," and "The Quest of Iranon" might—if typed on good stock—make excellent shelf-paper, but little else! (*Smiles*.) Now and then *Weird Tales* drags out some early atrocity which I have long since repudiated, and reprints it for the benefit of a gaping yokelery. I can't stop them, for they own the copyright. But in such cases I thank the dark gods Nyarlathotep and Yog-Sothoth that relatively few civilized people ever see *Weird Tales*!

TZ: What tales, if any, do you consider your best?

HPL: In my opinion, my best tale is "The Colour Out of Space." Second comes "The Music of Erich Zann," and after that my own preferences are very vague.

Nothing but "The Colour Out of Space" satisfied me as a whole. My regard for "Erich Zann" is negative rather than positive. I place it second merely because it isn't as bad as most of the rest.

TZ: The first story of importance in your "Mythos" cycle is "The Call of Cthulhu," published in *Weird Tales* in 1928. Why did the editor, Farnsworth Wright, originally reject it?

HPL: On the ground that it was too slow and obscure for his zippy morons.

TZ: I gather that, typically, he accepted it on second reading. What's your opinion of the tale now?

HPL: It's rather middling—not as bad as the worst, but full of cheap and cumbrous touches.

TZ: Wright also rejected your ambitious novelette *At the Mountains of Madness*, in which you stray far from your usual New England setting. Why did you write a tale about the South Pole?

HPL: About 1900 I became a passionate devotee of geography and history, and an intense fanatic on the subject of Antarctic exploration. *At the Mountains of Madness* was my attempt to pin down the vague feelings regarding the lethal, desolate white South which have haunted me ever since. Its hostile reception by Wright and others to whom it was shown probably did more than anything else to end my effective fictional career.

TZ: But *Astounding Stories* did finally accept it in 1935, as they did "The Shadow Out of Time."

HPL: The text of the *Astounding* version is nearly ruined—especially toward the end—by the inept mangling of Street & Smith's obtuse editors. I wish I could get the correct version printed as a book, but there's very little chance of such.

TZ: But one of your stories has recently been published as a book. Would you care to tell us about it?

HPL: My book-form *Shadow Over Innsmouth* is ready at last, and can be supplied—cloth-bound, 156 pages, and with four excellent illustrations by Frank Utpatel—for the modest and reasonable sum of one dollar, postpaid by the publisher, William Crawford. There are thirty-three bad misprints, but a table of errata on an inserted slip helps to neutralize that. Crawford also advertises a leather-bound edition—reglar de luxe stuff—for \$2.50, but anybody who pays that much for such a lousily printed mess is a sucker!

TZ: Haven't any major publishing houses considered your work?

HPL: Again and again publishers have approached me concerning a collection of tales, but negotiations have always fallen through in the end.

TZ: I understand that, in 1931, Putnam's considered a batch of your tales. What went wrong?

HPL: The grounds for rejection were twofold—first, that some of the tales are not subtle enough, too obvious and well explained, and secondly, that all the tales are too uniformly macabre in mood to stand collected publication.

This second reason is sheer bull, for as a matter of fact, unity of mood is a positive asset in a fictional collection. But I suppose the herd must have their comic relief! The book editor added some slices of bologna about later discussions concerning a volume in which heavier tales might be sandwiched in between lighter ones.

TZ: It's rumored that *Weird Tales* has accepted several tales ghostwritten by you in recent years. Will you continue in this line?

HPL (*shakes his head*): I am now cutting out as much of this ghostwriting as possible, since it involves too much exhausting labor in proportion to the returns. It is amusing that Wright accepts many of my ghostwritten tales while rejecting my signed work.

TZ: Aside from revision work, I gather much of your time is taken up with letter writing. And from what I've seen, you appear to write, letters as

Ninth Vacuum of Negative  
Matter in the Black Nebula  
of Yelshah, beyond the Third  
Cluster of Space-Time Continua.

Dear Klankash - Ton: -

Still it broods ..... cryptically, expectantly ..... & each morning with that disquieting suggestion of future & unperceived actual activity. The fear grows on me that it may be *that* itself — if so, I pray to Wana-yood-Siohat that The Craftsmen on Yaddith, who made it ere ever it was brought to Earth & to the ancient realm where Lemuria was some day to be born, had the mercy to depart just enough from Wolness-truth to prevent all of the good from entering & acting through it. Time will tell. If it is the monstrous Lord of Chaos, I shall sooner or later hear from its terrible & unalloyed messengers Nyarlathotep ..... & then come on this planet will know we are in any coming hour. But perhaps the Ekhnatonas of Yaddith are not void of discretion ..... we shall see; we shall see!

I am glad that "The House" did not weary you as much as it now wears me, & am herewith enclosing "The Colour Out of Space," as per request. This is a tale which I view, myself, with a certain amount of favour — it being the first full-fledged spaceman (1927) of what I consider my present manner of writing. And to think that reckless Measiah Goinbeck gave me only \$25.00 already for it ... ah succudel — ah succudel — but id, I ask you? I am likewise sending under separate cover Machen's "House of Souls", which will give you a chance to renew your acquaintance with such sterling shewboys as "The White People" & "The Great God Pan". As soon as the Druidic sorcerer Dui-Yah returns the M. R. Jamesiana, I will send you the latter. Meanwhile anything else in my collection — Dunsany, Udolpho, &c. &c. is shabby at your disposal. I really must prepare a catalogue of my weird items — after I assimilate the new Dearth Donation & see how much of that is worth cataloguing. Your description of your library is very interesting. I also have a fair array of English poetry, a sprinkling of the older standard novels & essays, quite a shelf of 18th century memoirs, a good deal of grammatical, rhetorical, & reference material, & a large section

A typical letter to fellow fantasist Clark Ashton Smith, November 7, 1930. It ran to eight pages.

easily as—well, as easily as you're talking with me right now.

HPL (nods): I write such things as easily and as rapidly as I would utter the same topics in conversation. Indeed, epistolary expression has with me largely replaced conversation.

TZ: How many letters do you write a day?

HPL: Five to ten epistles is perhaps the daily average hereabouts. The trouble is that many of them require research, work, or extended argumentative replies. (Shakes his head.) I must take drastic steps toward reducing this flood, and cutting down responsibilities generally.

TZ: You've never permitted radio or movie rights to be sold to any of your

stories. Why not?

HPL: What a popular dialogue-arranger could do to the atmosphere and artistic integrity of a seriously written story is appalling to contemplate! I shall never permit anything bearing my signature to be banalized and vulgarized into the kind of flat infantile twaddle which passes for "horror tales" amongst radio and cinema audiences!

TZ: Could you comment on some of the horror films you've seen?

HPL: The Bat made me drowse in the early twenties—and in 1932 an alleged Frankenstein on the screen would have made me drowse, had not a posthumous sympathy for poor Mrs. Shelley made me see red instead. And the

screen Dracula in 1931—I saw the beginning of that in Miami, Florida, but couldn't bear to watch it drag to its full term of dreariness, hence walked out into the fragrant tropic moonlight!

TZ: You've made a number of antiquarian trips to the South. How come you've never set a tale there?

HPL: Many people wonder why I don't exploit the traditional element of weirdness in the South—the brooding cypress swamps, the moldering plantation houses, the whispered Negro lore, etcetera. The fact is, however, that I can't feel the same deep, Gothic horror in any mild and genial region that I can in the rock-strewn, ice-bound, elm-shaded hillsides of my own New En-

## H.P. Lovecraft

gland. To me, whatever is cold is sinister, and whatever is warm is wholesome and life-giving.

TZ: I understand you're able to travel on an extremely limited budget. How much do you allot, say, for food on one of your tours?

HPL: A \$1.75 per week eating program is easy if you know how to manage it. It means merely keeping down to a quarter a day, and I can do that without half trying. When restaurants are high, I fall back on canned and packaged goods—knife, fork, spoon, and can opener being with me. A five-cent package of ginger wafers is a more than sufficient breakfast, while a ten-cent can of spaghetti or beans will do for dinner, with the residue of the cookies for dessert. That's only fifteen cents, leaving a margin for luxury on other days.

TZ: Are there any sorts of food you avoid?

HPL: From earliest infancy every sort of fish, mollusk, or crustacean has been like an emetic to me. Aside from seafood, my principal dietary aversions are tripe, liver, sauerkraut, spinach, any underdone meat, custards, and alcoholic liquor or anything with its flavor.

TZ: What foods do you like?

HPL: My three favorite dietary articles are cheese, preferably of the common hard variety, medium strength; chocolate, in any form; and ice cream, preferably vanilla or coffee—the latter being a popular New England flavor, though largely unknown elsewhere. My really favorite meal is the regular old New England turkey dinner, with highly seasoned dressing, cranberry sauce, onions, and mince pie for dessert.

I am not, however, a heavy eater—take only two meals per day, since my digestion raises hell if I try to eat oftener than once in seven hours. I have financial economy in eating worked out to a fine art, and know the self-service lunch rooms where I can get the best bargains. I never spend more than three dollars per week on food, and often not even nearly that.

TZ: Given your meager income, have you ever considered writing simply for the money?

HPL: As time passes, I must indeed find some source of the ten to fifteen dollars per week which I require for subsistence. But this source can never be original fiction. I don't care what it

Clockwise from upper right: 1925 silhouette from Lovecraft's New York period; his tombstone in Swan Point Cemetery, Providence; November '38 *Weird Tales* with HPL's "The Nameless City"; HPL's sketch of his home at 66 College Street, Providence; the house today, moved to 65 Prospect Street. Bottom right: Virgil Finlay's portrait of Lovecraft as an eighteenth-century gentleman.

is so long as it's honest, but it can't be literary whoredom. I may run an elevator, but I'll never write a hack story! TZ: How about more work for *Weird Tales*?

HPL: I believe this market has gradually closed to me on account of Wright's deference to a clientele demanding simple, understandable ghostliness with plenty of "human interest" and a brisk, concrete, cheerful, and non-atmospheric style.

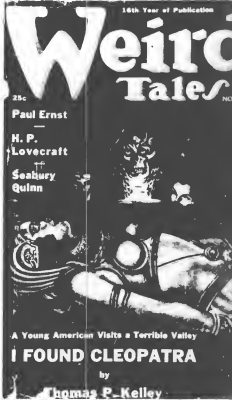
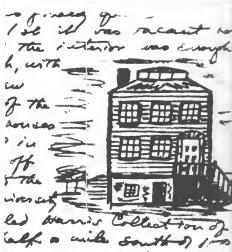
TZ: It's a pity there's no market for quality horror fiction in America. Do you think there'll ever be one?

HPL: The lack of a market for spectral material above the penny-dreadful grade is a very unfortunate circumstance. Yet I fear it is an irremediable one, since the actual number of persons to whom such things appeal is apparently small indeed.

TZ: How is it that you've never held a regular job to support your writing?

HPL: I made the mistake in youth of not realizing that literary endeavor does not always mean an income. I ought to have trained myself for some routine clerical work, like Hawthorne's affording a dependable stipend yet leaving my mind free for a certain amount of creative activity—but in the absence of immediate need I was too damned a fool to look ahead. The kinds of poems and stories and sometimes I write are not the kind one can translate into rent and nourishment with any degree of dependability; yet here I find myself in middle life with no trained commercial aptitude.

But like most shiftless dreamers I keep fancying that I shall stumble upon something—that something, as it were, will "turn up" before I hit the relief rolls, or that I shall at length discover how "jobs" are discerned and secured. And at that, certain "breaks" might come. Conceivable changes in public taste and editorial policy might enable me to capture every year something like the \$630 which my two novels in







*H.P. Lovecraft*

*IT'S MY SILHOUETTE  
BY PEREZ...*

*March 15, 1937*

*New York, N.Y.*

*Reinhold Khouri, Esq.*

ASTOUNDING drew last year. Were that so, I would have no worries.

TZ: Well, whatever your current difficulties, it's good to know that ill fortune hasn't discouraged you from evoking the beauty of this world as well as the horror. And so it might be fitting, I think, to conclude this interview with your poignant autobiographical poem "Background."

HPL: "I never can be tied to raw,  
new things,  
For I first saw the light in an  
old town,  
Where from my window huddled roofs  
sloped down  
To a quaint harbour rich with  
visionings.  
Streets with carved doorways where  
the sunset beams  
Flooded old fanlights and small  
window-panes,  
And Georgian steeples topped with  
gilded vanes—  
These were the sights that shaped  
my childhood dreams.  
Such treasures, left from times of  
cautious leaven,  
Cannot but loose the hold of  
flimsier wraiths  
That flit with shifting ways and  
muddled faiths  
Across the changeless walls of  
earth and heaven.  
They cut the moment's memory  
leave me free  
To stand alone before eternity."

H.P. Lovecraft died of cancer on March 15, 1937, age forty-six, and was buried in the Phillips family plot in Swan Point Cemetery in Providence. In 1939, his fellow writers August Derleth and Donald Wandrei founded Arkham House in Sauk City, Wisconsin, to preserve his work in hardcover. The first volume, *The Outsider and Others*, is now a collector's item selling for hundreds of dollars. Starting with an Armed Forces edition in the forties, Lovecraft's fiction has sold millions of copies in paperback. Several not very faithful movie versions of his tales have been made. Arkham House has published his *Selected Letters* in five volumes, from which most of the preceding answers have been drawn. We thank Arkham House for their use, and for the use of those quotations taken from "The Haunter of the Dark" in *The Dunwich Horror*, "He" in *Dagon*, and "Notes on the Writing of Weird Fiction" in *Marginalia*. A number of biographies have appeared in recent years, most notably L. Sprague de Camp's comprehensive and controversial *Lovecraft: A Biography* (Doubleday), Willis Conover's moving and beautifully produced *Lovecraft at Last* (Carrollton Clark), and Howard Phillips Lovecraft: *Dreamer on the Night Side* by Frank Belknap Long (Arkham House), a personal memoir by the man who was Lovecraft's best friend. In 1977, admirers raised money for a tombstone to be carved and set over his grave. On the modest stone appears the line, "I am Providence." 17

HOWARD PHILLIPS  
LOVECRAFT  
AUGUST 20, 1890  
MARCH 15, 1937  
I AM PROVIDENCE



HPL

# Something About Cats

by H. P. Lovecraft

With an Introduction and Notes by S. T. Joshi

HPL'S DEFINITIVE DEFENSE OF A CREATURE WHO,  
IF NOT MAN'S BEST FRIEND,  
IS CERTAINLY THE GENTLEMAN'S.

**F**ew are aware that H.P. Lovecraft's essays occupy, in bulk, more than twice the space of his fiction: the creator of Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu, who wrote more than fifty novelettes and tales, also wrote hundreds of essays on science, literary criticism, philosophy, politics, amateur journalism, travel, and autobiography. It is in these pieces that Lovecraft fully reveals that astounding erudition, found only indirectly in the tales, that made him one of the most intelligent men of his generation.

The following essay—originally titled "Cats and Dogs" but retitled "Something about Cats" by August Derleth—is among the most delightful to emerge from his pen; in its superb balance between playful humor and serious philosophy it stands alone in Lovecraft's work. Like the bulk of his essays, it was inspired by Lovecraft's lifelong connection with amateur journalism: in November of 1926 the Blue Pencil Club, a group of amateur writers based in New York City, was planning to hold a debate on the aesthetic superiority of cats or dogs. Lovecraft had become closely associated with this group during his two years spent in New York, but in April of 1926 he had left the "pest zone" of Brooklyn to return to the tranquil and familiar environs of his native Providence. Not wishing to be left out of the discussion,

however, he wrote a lengthy treatise for his good friend James F. Martan to read to the club.

Lovecraft's affection for cats was well known and of long standing. The cat was, for Lovecraft, both a source of cosmic mystery (recall the opening of 1920's "The Cats of Ulthar": "The cat is . . . the soul of antique Aegyptus, and bearer of tales from forgotten cities in Meræ and Ophir. . . . The Sphinx is his cousin, and he speaks her language; but he is more ancient than the Sphinx, and remembers that which she hath forgotten") and the model of domestic tranquility. Toward the end of his life, he bestowed upon a group of cats near his home the title "Koppa Alpha Tau" (KAT) fraternity. Cats make repeated intrusions into his fiction: who can forget that scene in *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* when legions of cats save Randolph Carter from loathsome toadlike entities on the moon, leaping back to earth before dawn?

But as this essay reveals, the cat was also, for Lovecraft, a symbol for the triumph of civilization over barbarism. This attitude is one which is hard for us to understand; but Lovecraft's generation, fresh from the earth-shaking effects of World War I and from such revolutionary works as Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, were terrified of the Impend-

ing collapse of Western culture and the civilized world. For Lovecraft this feeling was especially acute, since in his adherence to the manners of the elegant and dignified eighteenth century he had come to feel—clang with such diverse figures as Nietzsche and T.S. Eliot—that democracy was, as he wrote in a letter, "a mere catchword and illusion of inferior classes, visionaries, and dying civilizations." It is no wonder that he supported the autocracies of Mussolini and Hitler when they first arose. (Toward the end of his life, a decade after this essay was written, his attitudes changed considerably.) Remember, Lovecraft never lived to see the horrors of World War II; remember, too, that the fear of cultural collapse is still a very real one for us as we ponder the spectacle of nuclear war.

This essay, then, while full of wit and humor, is also a resounding statement of Lovecraft's views on his time. It has been necessary to bridge the piece for space considerations, but the text has been corrected from previous bowdlerized appearances and retains Lovecraft's idiosyncracies of spelling and punctuation. An earlier version appeared in the 1949 Arkham House volume *Something About Cats and Other Pieces*; the full text is now available in my edition of Lovecraft's *Uncollected Prose and Poetry III* (Necronomicon Press, 1982).

**B**eing told of the cat-and-dog fight about to occur in the Blue Pencil Club—a new thing for your circle, perhaps, though not unfamiliar to amateurdom as a whole—I cannot resist contributing a few Thomasic<sup>1</sup> yowls and sibilants upon my side of the dispute, though conscious that

the word of a venerable ex-member can scarcely have much weight against the brilliancy of such still active adherents as may bark upon the other side. Aware of my ineptitude at argument, my valued correspondent James Ferdinand Morton of Paterson has sent me the records of a similar controversy

in the *New York Tribune*, in which Mr. Carl Van Doren is on my side and Mr. Albert Payson Terhune on that of the canine tribe.<sup>2</sup> From this I would be glad to plagiarize such data as I need; but Mr. Morton, with genuinely Machiavellian subtlety, has furnished me with only a part of the feline section

whilst submitting the doggish brief in full. No doubt he imagines that this arrangement, in view of my own emphatic bias, makes for something like ultimate fairness; but for me it is exceedingly inconvenient, since it will force me to be more or less original in several parts of the ensuing remarks.

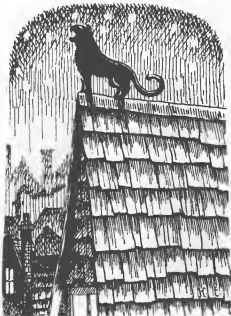
Between dogs and cats my degree of choice is so great that it would never occur to me to compare the two. I have no active dislike for dogs, any more than I have for monkeys, human beings, cows, sheep, or pterodactyls; but for the cat I have entertained a particular respect and affection ever since the earliest days of my infancy. In its flawless grace and superior self-sufficiency I have seen a symbol of the perfect beauty and bland impersonality of the universe itself, objectively considered; and in its air of silent mystery there resides for me all the wonder and fascination of the unknown. The dog appeals to cheap and facile emotions; the cat to the deepest founts of imagination and cosmic perception in the human mind. It is no accident that the contemplative Egyptians, together with such later poetic spirits as Poe, Gautier, Baudelaire, and Swinburne, were all sincere worshippers of the supple grinnalkin.

Naturally, one's preference in the matter of cats and dogs depends wholly upon one's temperament and point of view. The dog would appear to me to be the favourite of superficial, sentimental, emotional, and democratic

people—people who feel rather than think, who attach importance to mankind and the popular conventional emotions of the simple, and who find their greatest consolation in the fawning- and dependent attachments of a gregarious society. Such people live in a limited world of imagination; accepting uncritically the values of common folklore, and always preferring to have their naive beliefs, feelings, and prejudices tickled, rather than to enjoy a purely aesthetic and philosophic pleasure arising from discrimination, contemplation, and the recognition of austere absolute beauty. This is not to say that the cheaper emotions do not also reside in the average cat-lover's love of cats, but merely to point out that in ailurophily<sup>3</sup> there exists a basis of true aestheticism which kynophily<sup>4</sup> does not possess. The real lover of cats is one who demands a clearer adjustment to the universe than ordinary household platitudes provide; one who refuses to swallow the sentimental notion that all good people love dogs, children, and horses while all bad people dislike and are disliked by such. He is unwilling to set up himself and his cruder feelings as a measure of universal values, or to allow shallow ethical notions to warp his judgment. In a word, he had rather admire and respect than effuse and dote; and does not fall into the fallacy that pointless sociability and friendliness, or slavering devotion and obedience, constitute anything intrinsically admirable or exalted. Dog-lovers base their whole case on these commonplace, servile, and plebeian qualities, and amusingly judge the intelligence of a pet by its degree of conformity to their own wishes. Cat-lovers escape this delusion, repudiate the idea that cringing subservience and siddling companionship to man are supreme merits, and stand free to worship aristocratic independence, self-respect, and individual personality joined to extreme grace and beauty as typified by the cool, lithe, cynical, and unconquered lord of the housetops.

\* \* \*

That dogs are dear to the unimaginative peasant-burgher whilst cats appeal to the sensitive poet-aristocrat-philosopher will be clear in a moment when we reflect on the matter of biological association. Practical plebeian folk judge a thing only by its immediate touch, taste, and smell; while



more delicate types form their estimates from the linked images and ideas which the object calls up in their minds. Now when dogs and cats are considered, the stolid churl sees only the two animals before him, and bases his favour on their relative capacity to pander to his sloppy, unformed ideas of efficacy and friendship and flattering subservience. On the other hand the gentleman and thinker sees each in all its natural affiliations, and cannot fail to notice that in the great symmetries of organic life dogs fall in with slovenly wolves and foxes and jackals and coyotes and dingoes and painted hyaenas, whilst cats walk proudly with the jungle's lords, and own the haughty lion, the sinuous leopard, the regal tiger, and the shapely panther and jaguar as their kin. Dogs are the hieroglyphs of blind emotion, inferiority, servile attachment, and gregariousness—the attributes of commonplace, stupidly passionate, and intellectually and imaginatively undeveloped men. Cats are the runes of beauty, invincibility, wonder, pride, freedom, coldness, self-sufficiency, and dainty individuality—the qualities of sensitive, enlightened, mentally developed, pagan, cynical, poetic, philosophic, dispassionate, reserved, independent, Nietzschean, unbroken, civilised, master-class men.<sup>5</sup> The dog is a peasant and the cat is a gentleman.

We may, indeed, judge the tone and bias of a civilisation by its relative attitude toward dogs and cats. The



# Something About Cats



proud Egypt wherein Pharaoh was Pharaoh and pyramids rose in beauty at the wish of him who dreamed them bowed down to the cat, and temples were built to its goddess at Babastis.<sup>6</sup> In imperial Rome the graceful leopard adorned most homes of quality, lounging in insolent beauty in the atrium with golden collar and chain; while after the age of the Antonines the actual cat was imported from Egypt and cherished as a rare and costly luxury. So much for dominant and enlightened peoples. When, however, we come to the grovelling Middle Ages with their superstitions and ecstasies and monasticisms and maunderings over saints and their relics, we find the cool and impersonal loveliness of the felidae in very low esteem; and behold a sorry spectacle of hatred and cruelty shewn toward the beautiful little creature whose mousing virtues alone gained it sufferance amongst the ignorant churls who resented its self-respecting coolness and feared its cryptical and elusive independence as something akin to the dark powers of witchcraft. These boorish slaves of eastern darkness could not tolerate what did not serve their own cheap emotions and flimsy purposes. They wished a dog to fawn and hunt and fetch and carry, and had no use for the cat's gift of eternal and disinterested beauty to feed the spirit. One can imagine how they must have resented Pussy's magnificent reposefulness, unhurriedness, relaxation, and scorn for trivial human aims and concerns. Throw a stick, and the servile dog whizzes and pants and shambles to bring it to you. Do the

same before a cat, and he will eye you with coolly polite and somewhat bored amusement. And just as inferior people prefer the inferior animal which scampers excitedly because somebody else wants something, so do superior people respect the superior animal which lives its own life and knows that the puerile stick-throwings of alien bipeds are none of its business and beneath its notice. The dog barks and begs and tumbles to amuse you when you crack the whip. That pleases a meekness-loving peasant who relishes a stimulus to his sense of importance. The cat, on the other hand, charms you into playing for its benefit when it wishes to be amused; making you rush about the room with a paper on a string when it feels like the humour. That is personality and individuality and self-respect—the calm mastery of a being whose life is its own and not yours—and the superior person recognises and appreciates this because he too is a free soul whose position is assured, and whose only law is his own heritage and aesthetic sense. Altogether, we may see that the dog appeals to those primitive emotional souls whose chief demands on the universe are for meaningless affection, aimless companionship, and flattering attention and subservience; whilst the cat reigns among those more contemplative and imaginative spirits who ask of the universe only the objective sight of poignant, ethereal beauty and the animate symbolisation of Nature's

bland, relentless, reposeful, unhurried, and impersonal order and sufficiency. The dog *gives*, but the cat *is*.

Simple folk always overstress the ethical element in life, and it is quite natural that they should extend it to the realm of their pets. Accordingly we hear many inane dicta in favour of dogs on the ground that they are *faithful*, whilst cats are *treacherous*. Now just what does this really mean? Where are the points of reference? Certainly, the dog has so little imagination and individuality that it knows no motives but its master's; but what sophisticated mind can descry a positive virtue in this stupid abnegation of a birthright? Discrimination must surely award the palm to the superior cat, which has too much natural dignity to accept any scheme of things but its own, and which consequently cares not one whit what any clumsy human thinks or wishes or expects of it. It is not *treacherous*, because it has never acknowledged any allegiance to anything outside its own leisurely wishes; and *treachery* basically implies a departure from some covenant explicitly recognised. The cat is a realist, and no hypocrite. He takes what pleases him when he wants it, and makes no promises. He never leads you to expect more from him than he gives, and if you choose to be stupidly Victorian enough to mistake his purrs and rubbings of self-satisfaction for marks of transient affection toward you, that is no fault of his. He would not for a moment have you believe that he wants more of you than food and warmth and shelter and amusement—and he is certainly justified in criticising your aesthetic and imaginative development if you fail to find his grace, beauty, and cheerful decorative influence an abundantly sufficient repayment for all that you give him. The cat-lover need not be amazed at another's love for dogs—indeed, he may also possess this quality himself; for dogs are often very comely, and as lovable in a condescending way as a faithful old servant or tenant in the eyes of a master—but he cannot help feeling astonishment at those who do not share his love for cats. The cat is such a perfect symbol of beauty and superiority that it seems scarcely possible for any true aesthete and civilised cynic to do other than worship it. We call ourselves a dog's "master"—but who ever dared call himself the "master" of a cat? We



own a dog—he is with us as a slave and inferior because we wish him to be. But we *entertain* a cat—he adorns our hearth as a guest, fellow-lodger, and equal because *he* wishes to be there. It is no compliment to be the stupidly idolised master of a dog whose instinct it is to idolise, but it is a very distinct tribute to be chosen as the friend and confidant of a philosophic cat who is wholly his own master and could easily choose another companion if he found such an one more agreeable and interesting. A trace, I think, of this great truth regarding the higher dignity of the cat has crept into folklore in the use of the names “cat” and “dog” as terms of opprobrium. Whilst “cat” has never been applied to any sort of offender more serious than the mildly spiteful and innocuously sly female gossip and commentator, the words “dog” and “cur” have always been linked with villeness, dishonour, and degradation of the gravest type. In the crystallisation of this nomenclature there has undoubtedly been present in the popular mind some dim, half-unconscious realisation that there are depths of slinking, whining, fawning, and servile ignobility which no kith of the lion and the leopard could ever attain. The cat may fall low, but he is always unbroken. He is, like the Nordic among men, one of those who govern their own lives or die.

We have but to glance analytically at the two animals to see the points pile up in favour of the cat. Beauty, which is probably the only thing of any basic significance in all the cosmos, ought to be our chief criterion; and here the cat excels so brilliantly that all comparisons collapse. Some dogs, it is true, have beauty in a very ample degree; but even the highest level of canine beauty falls far below the feline average. The cat is classic whilst the dog is Gothic—nowhere in the animal world can we discover such really Hellenic perfection of form, with anatomy adapted to function, as in the felidae. Puss is a Doric temple—an Ionic colonnade—in the utter classicism of its structural and decorative harmonies. And this is just as true kinetically as statically, for art has no parallel for the bewitching grace of the cat's slightest motion. The sheer, perfect aestheticism of kitty's lazy stretchings, industrious face-washings, playful rollings, and little involuntary shiftings in sleep is something as keen



and vital as the best pastoral poetry or genre painting; whilst the unerring accuracy of his leaping and springing, running and hunting, has an art-value just as high in a more spirited way. But it is his capacity for leisure and repose which makes the cat preëminent. Mr. Carl Van Vechtan, in *Peter Whiffle*,<sup>7</sup> holds up the timeless restfulness of the cat as a model for a life's philosophy, and Prof. William Lyon Phelps has very effectively captured the secret of felinity when he says that the cat does not merely *lie down*, but “pours his body out on the floor like a glass of water.” What other creature has thus merged the aestheticism of mechanics and hydraulics? Contrast with this the inept panting, wheezing, fumbling, drooling, scratching, and general clumsiness of the average dog with his myriad false and wasted motions. And in the detail of neatness the fastidious cat is of course immeasurably ahead. We always love to touch a cat, but only the insensitive can uniformly welcome the frantic and humid nuzzlings and pawings of a dusty and perhaps not inodorous canine which leaps and fusses and writhes about in awkward feverishness for no particular reason save that blind nerve-centres have been spurred by certain meaningless stimuli. There is a wearying excess of bad manners in all this doggish fury—well-bred people don't paw and maul one, and surely enough we invariably find the cat gentle and reserved in his advances, and delicate even when he glides gracefully into your lap with cultivated purrs, or leaps whimsically on the table where you are writing to play

with your pen in modulated, serio-comic pats. I do not wonder that Mahomet, that sheik of perfect manners, loved cats for their urbanity and disliked dogs for their boorishness; or that cats are the favourites in the polite Latin countries whilst dogs take the lead in heavy, practical, and beer-drinking Central Europe. Watch a cat eat, and then watch a dog. The one is held in check by an inherent and inescapable daintiness, and lends a kind of grace to one of the most ungraceful of all processes. The dog, on the other hand, is wholly repulsive in his bestial and insatiate greediness; living up to his forest kinship by “wolfing” most openly and unashamedly. Returning to beauty of line—is it not significant that while many normal breeds of dogs are conspicuously and admittedly ugly, no healthy and well-developed feline of any species whatsoever is other than



beautiful? There are, of course, many ugly cats; but these are always individual cases of mongrelism, malnutrition, deformity, or injury. No breed of cats in its proper condition can by any stretch of the imagination be thought of as even slightly ungraceful—a record against which must be pitted the depressing spectacle of impossibility flattened bulldogs, grotesquely elongated dachshunds, hideously shapeless and shaggy Airedales, and the like....

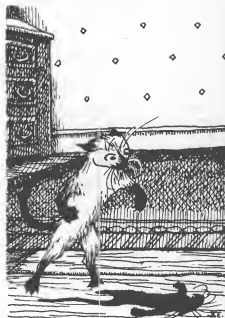
In the matter of intelligence we find the caninities making amusing claims—amusing because they so na-

# Something About Cats

ively measure what they conceive to be an animal's intelligence by its degree of subservience to the human will. A dog will retrieve, a cat will not; *therefore* (sic!) the dog is the more intelligent. Dogs can be more elaborately trained for circus and vaudeville acts than cats, *therefore* (O Zeus, O Royal Mount!) they are cerebrally superior. Now of course this is all the sheerest nonsense. We would not call a weak-spirited man more intelligent than an independent citizen because we can make him vote as we wish whereas we can't influence the independent citizen, yet countless persons apply an exactly parallel argument in appraising the grey matter of dogs and cats. Competition in servility is something to which no self-respecting Thomas or Tabitha ever stooped, and it is plain that any really effective estimate of canine and feline intelligence must proceed from a careful observation of dogs and cats in a detached state—uninfluenced by human beings—as they formulate certain objectives of their own and use their own mental equipment in achieving them. When we do this, we arrive at a very wholesome respect for our purring hearthside friend who makes so little display and ado about his wishes and business methods; for in every conception and calculation he shows a steel-cold and deliberate union of intellect, will, and sense of proportion which puts utterly to shame the emotional sloppings-over and docilely acquired artificial tricks of the "clever" and "faithful" pointer or sheep-dog. Watch a cat decide to move through a door, and see how patiently he waits for his opportunity, never losing sight of his purpose even when he finds it expedient to feign other interests in the interim. Watch him in the thick of the chase, and compare his calculating patience and quiet study of his terrain with the noisy floundering and pawing of his canine rival. It is not often that he returns empty-handed. He knows what he wants, and means to get it in the most effective way, even at the sacrifice of time—which he philosophically recognises as unimportant in the aimless cosmos. There is no turning him aside or distracting his attention—and we know that among humans this very quality of mental tenacity, this ability to carry a single thread through complex distractions, is considered a pretty good sign of intellectual vigour and maturity. Children, old crones, peasants, and dogs ramble; cats

and philosophers stick to the point. In resourcefulness, too, the cat attests his superiority. Dogs can be well trained to do a single thing, but psychologists tell us that these responses to an automatic memory instilled from outside are of little worth as indices of real intelligence. To judge the abstract development of a brain, confront it with new and unfamiliar conditions and see how well its own strength enables it to achieve its object by sheer reasoning without blazed trails. Here the cat can silently devise a dozen mysterious and successful alternatives whilst poor Fido is barking in bewilderment and wondering what it is all about. Granted that Rover the retriever may make a greater bid for popular sentimental regard by going into the burning house and saving the baby in traditional cinema fashion, it remains a fact that whiskered and purring Nig<sup>a</sup> is a higher-grade biological organism—something physiologically and psychologically nearer a man because of his very freedom from man's orders, and as such entitled to a higher respect from those who judge by purely philosophic and aesthetic standards. We can respect a cat as we cannot respect a dog, no matter which personally appeals the more to our mere doting fancy; and if we be aesthetes and analysts rather than commonplace-lovers and emotionalists, the scales must inevitably turn completely in kitty's favour. It may be added, moreover, that even the aloof and sufficient cat is by no means devoid of sentimental appeal. Once we get rid of the uncivilised ethical bias—the "treacherous" and "horrid bird-catcher" prejudice—we find in the

"harmless, necessary cat" the very apex of happy domestic symbolism; whilst small kittens become objects to adore, idealize, and celebrate in the most rhapsodic of dactyls and anapaests, iambs and trochaics. I, in my own senescent mellowness, confess to an inordinate and wholly unphilosophic predilection for tiny coal-black kitties with large yellow eyes, and could no more pass one without petting him than Dr. Johnson could pass a sidewalk post without striking it.

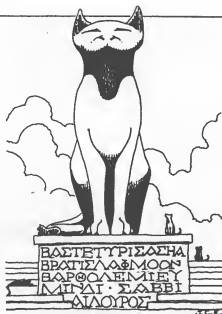


The superior imaginative inner life of the cat, resulting in superior self-possession, is well known. A dog is a pitiful thing, depending wholly on companionship, and utterly lost except in packs or by the side of his master. Leave him alone and he does not know what to do except bark and howl and trot about till sheer exhaustion forces him to sleep. A cat, however, is never without the potentialities of contentment. Like a superior man, he knows how to be alone and happy. Once he looks about and finds no one to amuse him, he settles down to the task of amusing himself; and no one really knows cats without having occasionally peeked stealthily at some lively and well-balanced kitten which believes itself to be alone. Only after such a glimpse of unaffected tail-chasing grace and unstudied purring can one fully understand the charm of those lines which Coleridge wrote with reference to the human rather than the feline young—



"... a limber elf,  
Singing, dancing to itself."<sup>9</sup>

But whole volumes could be written on the playing of cats, since the varieties and aesthetic aspects of such sportiveness are infinite. Be it sufficient to say that in such pastimes many cats have exhibited traits and actions which psychologists authentically declare to be motivated by genuine humour and whimsicality in its purest sense; so that the task of "making a cat laugh" may not be so impossible a thing even outside the borders of Cheshire. In short, a dog is an incomplete thing. Like an inferior man, he needs emotional stimuli from outside, and must set something artificial up as a god and motive. The cat, however, is perfect in himself. Like the human philosopher, he is a self-sufficient entity and microcosm. He is a real and integrated being because he thinks and feels himself to be such, whereas the dog can conceive of himself only in relation to something else. Whip a dog and he licks your hand—faugh! The beast has no idea of himself except as an inferior part of an organism whereof you are a superior part—he would no more think of striking back at you than you would think of pounding your own head when it punishes you with a headache. But whip a cat and watch it glare and move backward hissing in outraged dignity and self-respect! One more blow, and it strikes you in return; for it is a gentleman and your equal, and will accept no infringement on its personality and body of privileges. It is



only in your house anyway because it wishes to be, or perhaps even as a condescending favour to yourself. It is the house, not you, it likes; for philosophers realise that human beings are at best only minor adjuncts to scenery. Go one step too far, and it leaves you altogether. You have mistaken your relationship to it and imagined you are its master, and no real cat can tolerate that breach of good manners. Henceforward it will seek companions of greater discrimination and clearer perspective. Let anaemic persons who believe in "turning the other cheek" console themselves with cringing dogs—for the robust pagan with the blood of Nordic twilights in his veins there is no beast like the cat; intrepid steed of Freya, who can boldly look even Thor and Odin full in the face and stare contemptuously with great round eyes of undimmed yellow or green.

\* \* \*

Beauty, sufficiency, ease, and good manners—what more can civilisation require? We have them all in the divine little monarch who lounges gloriously on his silken cushion before the hearth. Loveliness and joy for their own sake—pride and harmony and coordination—spirit, restfulness, and completeness—all here are present, and need but a sympathetic disillusionment for worship in full measure. What fully civilised soul but would eagerly serve as high-priest of Bast?<sup>10</sup> The star of the cat, I think, is just now in the ascendant, as we emerge little by little from the dreams of ethics and democracy which clouded the nineteenth century and raised the grubbing and unlovely dog to the pinnacle of sentimental regard. Whether a renaissance of monarchy and beauty will restore our Western civilisation, or whether the forces of disintegration are already too

powerful for even the fascist sentiment to check,<sup>11</sup> none may yet say; but in the present moment of cynical world-unmasking between the pretence of the eighteen-hundreds and the ominous mystery of the decades ahead we have at least a flash of the old pagan perspective and the old pagan clearness and honesty.

And one idol lit up by that flash, seen fair and lovely on a dream-throne of silk and gold under a chryselephantine dome, is a shape of deathless grace not always given its due among groping mortals—the haughty, the unconquered, the mysterious, the luxurious, the Babylonian, the impersonal, the eternal companion of superiority and art—the type of perfect beauty and the brother of poetry—the bland, grave, competent, and patrician cat. <sup>12</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Catlike—"Thomas" being, then as now, a common name for cats.
2. The controversy was actually conducted in the pages of the *New York Herald Tribune Magazine*. In the issue for October 17, 1926, Van Doren (1885-1950) wrote an article called "Gentlemen Prefer Cats," which, although brief, covers much the same ground as Lovecraft; Van Doren's basic point is that men like dogs because dogs assuage their sense of inferiority. Albert Payson Terhune (1872-1942), well-known author of *Lord of the Dogs* (1919) and many other novels and tales about the canine tribe, replied in the issue for October 24, 1926, with an article "The Poor Dogs." Van Doren never made a rebuttal to this, but in the issue for October 31, 1926, Harvey O'Higgins attacked Van Doren again in an article called "Don't Pick on the Dogs." This seems to have ended the controversy.
3. Neo-Greek coinage ("love of cats").
4. Neo-Greek coinage ("love of dogs").
5. A reference to Nietzsche's notion of the "superman" (or "overman"), one above the "slave morality" of the average citizen.
6. Lovecraft seems to imagine that Bubastis is a place, but it is merely the Greek name for the fire- and cat-goddess Bast (see note 10).
7. Carl Van Vechten, *Peter Whiffle: His Life and Works* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922).
8. "Nig" was a common name for black cats in Lovecraft's day. Lovecraft himself, when a boy, had a cat named Nigger-Man, and used this name for the cat in "The Rats in the Walls" (1923).
9. Coleridge, *Christabel*, ll. 656-57.
10. The Egyptian fire- and cat-goddess. Frequently referred to under her Greek name, Bubastis.
11. Note Lovecraft's discussion of Fascism in a letter to James F. Morton, February 10, 1923: "We advocate the preservation of conditions favourable to the growth of beautiful things—imposing palaces, beautiful cities, elegant literature, reposeful art and music. . . . We regard the rise of democratic ideas as a sign of cultural old age and decay, and deem it a compliment to such men as Mussolini when they are said to be 'XVth century types.'" (Selected Letters I, pp. 207-8).



# Huggins

Illustration by Nicole Culi



## by Ennis Duling

SEEN FROM THE INSIDE,  
THE FUNNY PAPERS  
WEREN'T VERY FUNNY.

Pam laughed at Curt Neal. "My favorite frizzy-haired writer," she called him. He tried taking it good-naturedly. He was used to having people say his book, *The American Water Shortage*, was the driest thing they had ever read. Pam went a step further and said his greatest fault was that he was too serious. He did not mind, so long as he got to see her. He figured that if he was persistent, like a researcher going after a fact, eventually she would agree to marry him. Pam said Curt's second greatest fault was that he was predictable. "One bad marriage in a lifetime is enough for me," she added.

When he was not off somewhere researching his next issue-oriented article, he spent his Sundays at Pam's house. Much as he loved their occasional nights together, he looked forward to the quiet afternoons and the homecooked dinners. He kissed Pam

lightly and swooped her three-year-old daughter Robin high in the air. "How you been, kiddo?"

"Read to me, Mr. Neal. Read the funnies."

Pam acted like his rescuer. "I've already read them twice, Robin. I'm sure Mr. Neal doesn't want to read the comics."

"I don't mind. What's Huggins up to this week?"

"I'll be in the kitchen if either of you misses me," Pam said.

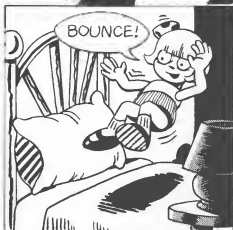
"We have important literature to read. Call us when dinner is ready."

For the first few Sundays Curt was afraid Robin was going to ask him, "What does it mean, Mr. Neal?" He knew he could not explain to a three-year-old the problems suffered by all those lumps and squiggles. He was relieved when he understood that she did not expect meaning. Odd shapes and bright colors were enough. Her favorite was *Huggins' World*, a strip that traded on being brainless rather than lightheartedly philosophical.

Huggins is a round, chinless character, with a bristly mustache of the type Hitler made infamous and hair plastered flat on his head. He lives in a world of perfectly straight horizons and spends his days trying to take naps and baths. A typical *Huggins* strip goes like this: Huggins climbs into a hammock strung between two trees that are so thin that



# World



they would have trouble supporting leaves and a bird at the same time. He snores loud Z's. Little Gertrude, a younger relative of some sort, comes out of the house with a rug and a rug beater shaped like a pretzel on a stick. She wallows the rug. The cloud of dust hovers over Huggins and then rains on him.

Robin loved that particular cartoon. After reading it four times, Curt asked her, "Why's that funny, Robin?"

She turned shy, as if he were a stranger. They read *Huggins* again.

Months passed before Curt had an adult conversation about *Huggins*. After Robin went to bed one Sunday, he asked Pam, "Do you remember reading *Huggins* as a kid?"

"Sure." He couldn't believe how beautiful she looked.

"I do, too. Dad used to read it to us. I was pretty young because I have an image of our old house on Porter Street. We moved when I was seven."

"But *Huggins* never changes, does he? He is still taking his naps and his baths and chasing trolley cars."

Curt nodded in agreement. "His wife plays mah-jongg. The yard surrounded by a board fence. Huggins' car is a poorly drawn Model A. Even when Little Gertrude dresses up in a space suit, it's from a

1930's space opera. I'm surprised the paper still runs the cartoon."

Pam smiled at him. "People don't read a newspaper just to be informed on government policy. Not everybody is like you, Curt. You want to steal a few moments of pleasure from a three-year-old."

"I want to understand what's going on. Why does one man continue to wear narrow-lapel suits and another to say, 'Like, wow, man, out of sight!'"

"*Huggins* is a cartoon, Curt, not a work of philosophy."

"I wonder what the cartoonist is like. You know, it says his name is Otto F. Huggins. I picture him raising a forty-eight-star flag on the Fourth of July and having pictures of President Roosevelt over his mantel."

"He's probably as modern as anyone else. He does the cartoon for money, and sticking to a formula is easier than thinking for a living."

"I wonder."

"Why don't you find out?"

"What do you mean? Write an article on him?"

"You are a writer."

"Interviews with out-of-date cartoonists are not my forte."

She leaned over and kissed him. "You are a dear friend, Curt." He could imagine the unspoken

# Huggins' world

conclusion, "But you are so serious and so predictable."

"All right then! I'll interview Otto Huggins and surprise him with the atomic bomb and the disposable razor."

She laughed at him again.

Curt called the newspaper, which gave him the name of a features syndicate, which referred him to an agent who never answered his mail or his phone. Not one reference book in the library had a mention of Otto Huggins. Curt was intrigued as well as annoyed by the mystery. Pam did not seem to realize that time was money and that Otto Huggins was turning into a big waste of both. Angry with himself for starting the project, Curt wrote to Mr. Huggins, care of the obscure agent, and vowed to forget the whole thing.

Most Sundays still meant dinner at Pam's and comics with Robin, but he was unable to fool himself. He was a "close friend." Romance had faded from their relationship.

Months after he had written to Mr. Huggins, a tattered envelope, bearing a three-cent stamp, arrived with the mail. Somebody at the post office was asleep again, he thought as he tore it open.

Dear Mr. Neal (it read),

Greetings to a fellow toiler in the great journalistic enterprise. Delighted to receive your request for an interview. Glad to comply for the sake of my readers and posterity. Take the 7:30 p.m. train out of Stockhampton, and a driver will meet you at the South Bingham depot. Expect you on July 29.

Otto Huggins

The letter was inconvenient and confusing. It arrived on the twenty-ninth, giving him no chance to plan. He decided he must cancel and called information to see if there was a listing for Otto Huggins in South Bingham.

"Do you have the correct state, sir? We have no South Bingham in our directory."

A road atlas was no help. And hadn't all the trains through Stockhampton been eliminated years ago? He called a travel bureau and found out they had.

Then it dawned on him. A practical joke! From the three-cent stamp to the nonexistent train, the cartoonist was pulling his leg. Instead of writing, "Go jump in a lake," he was setting him up. Or maybe it was Pam's idea of a joke. But somehow he couldn't see her testing him that way. He had failed already.

He phoned Pam. "How would you and Robin like to be the victims of a practical joke?"

"My fondest wish," she said doubtfully. When he explained about Huggins' letter, she asked,

"What do you plan to do, stand on the platform for a half-hour and then go home?"

"That's about it. Maybe he'll meet us there. Maybe it's all a hoax, but I'd like to know. You can kid me about it afterwards."

"Since you put it that way, how can I refuse?"

They drove the twenty miles to Stockhampton

**Either Curt had gone completely insane, or he had taken a phantom train to a place where the laws of nature did not hold much sway. He grinned as they whipped madly through the darkness.**

in Pam's car. The station was deserted, and most of the windows were boarded up. They could not have reached the tracks at all if vandals had not broken down a barbed-wire-topped gate. "No trespassing" signs were everywhere.

"Do you think we ought to go in, Curt?" Pam said.

"What can it hurt?" Robin tugged at their hands.

The front of the station was a wreck. Pigeons were living in the eaves. The posters of long-closed musicals were covered over with obscenities. They nearly had to wade through trash and broken glass.

"I'm glad Robin can't read," Pam said.

"What you say?" Robin asked.

The tracks were badly rusted, and grass grew between the ties. Curt began to feel foolish, an experience he did not like. Otto Huggins must have been at home (wherever that might be) watching the bright blue evening sky from his hammock and laughing.

"Let's get out of here," Curt said. "It's seven-thirty. I suggest we stop somewhere for ice cream and forget this."

"I hear something!" Robin shouted.

Paying her no attention, the two adults turned to go. Then Curt saw the white smoke puffing from the stack and heard a whistle set singing by boiler pressure. A magnificent locomotive, shined and greased like no engine Amtrak ever ran, steamed into the station. The engineer leaned from the cab and waved to Robin. The coaches which followed were freshly painted, but no passengers looked out the windows. A conductor jumped from the nearest coach.

Pam grabbed Curt's arm. "You're not getting on that thing?"

"It's a train for tourists. I'll call you when I get there."

"That's no train for tourists. It's weird."

"Maybe so, but I'm interested. There is a story in this."

"Then we're going with you. I got you into it."

"We're going on the train!" Robin said.

"No, you're not," Curt said sharply. "You'd both get in the way. I have an interview to conduct." He held up his briefcase as proof. "This is a job for a reporter. I'll be all right."

They enacted one of those train-side embraces where the girl stands on one leg and leans against the man. "Me too!" Robin demanded. The three hugged desperately.

"All aboard!"

As the train pulled from the station, Curt fell into a richly upholstered seat in an empty car and



stared back at Pam and Robin. They stood in the litter, waving until he was out of sight. He was as excited as a boy entering the House of Mystery at the fair.

Two hours later, the conductor, whom he had not seen the whole time, announced South Bingham. The train whisked away from the empty platform. Curt could see no houses or lights. He looked for a phone but could not find one.

In the distance he heard an engine sounding like the snort of a horse on a cold day. Dim headlights shone on him, and a voice called, "You that writer fellow come to interview Huggins? Hiccup!" The man in the car did not really hiccup; rather, he made a noise as if pronouncing "hiccup."

Curt walked over to the car, a black box on wheels. "Curt Neal. I'm the man you're waiting for."

"Name's Gus. Hiccup. Drive you to Huggins.

Let's go." He was smudged with grease and reeked of cologne.

They tore out of the station and down a twisting road. The headlights cut through only three feet of darkness. Every few seconds Gus spun the steering wheel and screamed, "Holy whillikers!" One side of the car lifted high in the air, and they sped along on two wheels.

"Slow down!" Curt shouted.

"Hold your hat, mister. Got to get there.

Holy whillikers!" They stopped suddenly; the engine cut off, giving a sustained Bronx cheer; then the car shook itself and settled down like a cow in its stall.

"Now you've done it," Gus said.

He climbed out of the car and lifted the hood.

Curt held a flashlight while Gus pushed the three sparkplug wires and slapped the round cage which held the chipmunks. "Lazy fuel pump. Hiccup. Needs nuts." He pushed two acorns through a door in the cage, and soon they were careening on their way.

Curt was glad that Gus did not give him time to think. He was sure that unalloyed terror should have been his reaction. Either he had gone completely insane around seven-thirty, or he had taken a phantom train to a place where the laws of nature did not hold much sway. But his emotions had crossed some fog-covered boundary as well, and he grinned as they whipped madly through the darkness.

At last Gus jammed on the footbrake while pulling the emergency brake with both hands. Curt was thrown forward. "Huggins' house is there," Gus said, pointing back up the road.

"What do I owe you?" Curt fished in his hip pocket for his wallet.

"Keep your money, mister. Holy whillikers!"

The car raced off, backfiring as it leaned around a corner.

Huggins' house looked like the one in the cartoon: a two-story box with the door dead center, the windows balancing each other, and an ornate, out-of-place cupola perched on top. The door was answered by a spindly woman whose grey hair was pulled so tightly back that the bones of her face seemed to poke through the skin. "What can I do for you, young man?"

"Mr. Huggins expects me, I believe."

"Huggins is taking a bath. He never chases salesmen at night anyway. You'll have to come back."

"Mr. Huggins wants to see me. He arranged for Gus to pick me up at the station."

"You're new around here, ain't you?"

"I'm a writer. Curt Neal. You must be Mrs. Huggins."

"You want to rent the spare room?" she said.

"Actually, I want to interview Mr. Huggins for an article."

# Huggins' world

"They always come to look at the spare room when I'm knitting and Huggins is taking a bath. That is the way of the world. Well, come in. I'll have Gertie show it to you. We don't like people who disturb Huggins when he is taking his nap."

Gertie was a thin kid with a big head and round eyes. Curt almost asked her if she had a pretzel-shaped rug beater, but he wanted to be careful what he said and did in this strange place. She led him upstairs into a back room and began to bounce on the brass bed, saying "bounce" each time she sank in the mattress. "Will (bounce) you (bounce) take (bounce) the (bounce) room?"

"Sure. Will you call me when your father gets

that all his pens and pencils had been taken.

Mrs. Huggins was in the kitchen cooking eggs on a cast iron frying pan which looked like the one she threw at Huggins some Sundays. "So you took the room. It's five dollars a week."

"Is Mr. Huggins up yet?"

"Huggins did not rest well last night and has slept in."

Curt might have been in the craziest corner of the universe, but he was getting annoyed. "Do you know someone stole my pens last night?"

"We can't have pens lying about, now can we? Do you want your eggs scrambled or some way I can't do?"

Curt did not see Huggins until late that morning when the cartoonist was on his way from the bathroom to the hammock in the backyard. Huggins had all the majesty of a stockbroker before the Crash, and he moved down the hall with a lazy grace. His Hitler mustache and plastered hair almost looked distinguished, as if he was able to will all the silliness from the face.

"You must be Mr. Neal, the journalist," he said, taking Curt's hand languidly. "I am sure that many questions have troubled your rest since your arrival here. All can be explained in due time; once, of course, I am sufficiently awake."

"Could I borrow a pen or pencil, sir?"

"A nap is what the body requires. Hot soothing water and rest. No writing implements."

A good reporter, Curt walked around town. He saw the cop on the beat steal an apple from in front of the market and watched the kids play ball on the lot near the drugstore. When one hit a home run through a side window, the druggist and the policeman chased the ballplayers until they were out of sight. The horse that pulled the milk wagon ate the hat on a rich lady's head. A bum picked a cigar out of the gutter and smoked it daintily by holding it with a toothpick. Storks circled the maternity wing of the hospital.

Curt did not get to interview Huggins the first day, nor the day after, and everybody else in the town had the silliest answers to his questions. In every store Curt asked for a pen or pencil and received a pitying smile in answer. "We have those items on order," was the standard reply.

On the third day Huggins was needed at the railway yard to change a flat wheel on a locomotive. While Curt was trying to talk to him, he ran out of the yard after the trolley, which was already far down the street. The next day Huggins was exhausted. The day after he bathed for hours and then stretched out in his hammock. In the evening he listened to his floor model radio and tolerated no interruptions.



out of the bath?"

"My (bounce) father?"

"Is he your uncle?"

"Who (bounce)?"

"Mr. Huggins."

"Huggins (bounce) is Huggins, and he takes long baths when he gets the chance (bounce)."

"Please call me."

Closing the door, she said, "Creak, slam!"

Curt wrote for a few minutes and then lay on the bed hoping to hear water running out of the tub. He was asleep soon.

The crowing of a rooster woke him the next morning. He looked out the window at a perfectly flat landscape broken only by a few triangular pine trees near the horizon. There was not a sound in the house. Rather than go straight downstairs, he thought he would work on his notes for a few minutes. His notebook was where he had left it on the bureau, but the page he had written and his pen were both gone. He opened his briefcase and found

**Curt  
hiked out to the horizon line  
where the blue dots  
that made up the sky  
met the green dots  
of the earth.  
He knew he was trapped.**

Curt hiked out to the horizon line where the blue dots that made up the sky met the green dots of the earth. He followed the railroad tracks until they came together in a vanishing point. He tried walking around the circumference, looking for a way out, but the dots of the background repeated themselves without end. He knew he was trapped. He would never see Pam and Robin again.

He switched off the radio and demanded that the cartoonist let him go.

"But I am not holding you, Mr. Neal."

"Yes, you are. And you haven't spoken with me or explained a thing about this crazy world."

"Go with my blessing, dear sir. I look forward to seeing your article in print. I have enjoyed our acquaintance and could well imagine the tenor of your incisive questions."

"How do I get home?"

"Ask Gus. He'll drive you."

But it was not that simple. A cat had gotten into the fuel pump. Gus had ordered more chipmunks, but there was no knowing when they might arrive. "Be patient. *Hiccup*," Gus said.

All days seemed the same to Curt. Laziness hung on him like an oversized coat. Pam was like a dream from another word in which logic was logical. He dragged himself out to the horizon line and chopped at the background with an ax. It sprung back like Jello. A cop chased him across the landscape, blowing his whistle. Curt spent the night in a jail cell with thick bars a foot apart. The next morning Huggins visited.

"I never expected you, my guest and a journalist, to be in the town lockup. I have misjudged you, I fear, Mr. Neal."

"I want to go home, Huggins."

"Indeed, I have paid your bail."

"I mean home to where things make sense."

"Take the train, dear sir."

"It's always leaving tomorrow."

"Wait until tomorrow, then."

"Tomorrow never gets here, damn it!"

"Tut, tut. Aside from the unfortunate profanity, you sound like a child awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus. A few naps and the day is done, Mr. Neal."

After his release, Curt tried burning his way through the horizon but was arrested again when he stopped to watch a circus parade. Huggins went bail for the second time. "After all, I brought you to our fair village, did I not? I introduced the fly into the ointment. I should have known that one of your profession would be unruly. But there is a simple remedy."

When Curt woke the next morning, the horizon line was at the edge of the garden. The board fences that defined Huggins' yard converged quickly

to a vanishing point. The trolley seemed to pop in and out of view as it passed. When Curt tried to walk to town, he found that the dots that made up the boundary stopped him before he got out of the yard.

He fell down and cried. When he looked up again, there was a light bulb above his head! He pretended to nap in his room for most of the day, but he kept track of Huggins' whereabouts. At last he could hear him in the bathtub bellowing and snorting.

Curt began a room-to-room search of the second floor. He pulled the drawers from the bureaus and spilled the contents on the floor. He ransacked the closets. Nothing. With a knife he slashed the sofa in the living room. In the kitchen he emptied canisters of flour and sugar.

He was at the head of the cellar steps when Mrs. Huggins came in the kitchen. "Huggins isn't going to like this. Scream!" She threw the frying pan at him.

He ran down the cellar steps. There were dozens of boxes and trunks; toys, tools and furniture were stacked helter-skelter. He could look in the cellar for years and not find anything.


Then the light bulb appeared above his head again. The cupola! In the kitchen he met Huggins, a bath towel wrapped around his pale middle. "You have gone berserk, sir, and I have called the constabulary." Curt pushed past him and ran up the steps. The attic was a worse jumble than the cellar. A wooden ladder led up to the cupola. He heaved the hatchway door upward.

The cupola was a workshop. On a table were pens, pencils, crayons, and paints and brushes. He picked a large black crayon, the type they give first-graders.

For a moment he looked from the front window. Most of the town had gathered in Huggins' front yard. Already a man was selling balloons. Curt could hear the policeman running up the attic steps and yelling, "Stop in the name of the law!"

There were windows on all sides, but there was on unbroken section of wall about the width of a man. Curt drew a tall rectangle and then a door-knob. "Come down, villain," the policeman yelled.

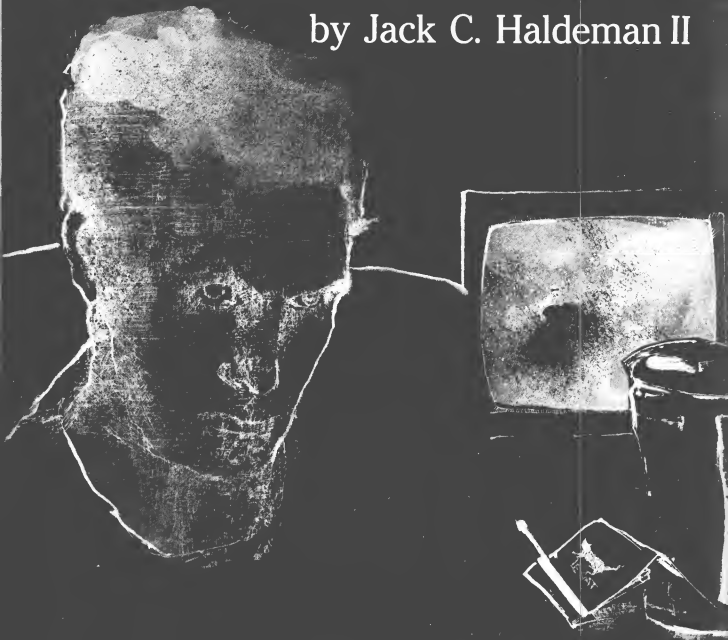
Curt wrote on the rectangle, "This door is the way to Neal's real home." As the cop beat on the closed hatchway, Curt opened the door he had drawn, stepped through, and slammed it after him.

He was in a corner of Pam's living room. In a moment she was in his arms. 

# Open Frame

HE WAS JUST YOUR AVERAGE JOE.  
BUT SOMEWHERE INSIDE LURKED A GENIUS.

by Jack C. Haldeman II



Stan Jenkins sat in the battered chair sipping a beer with his feet propped up on the coffee table. The television set was flickering in front of him, showing a replay of last week's billiard tournament on the sports network. His t-shirt was dirty and torn, his jeans streaked with grease and oil. Stan liked to relax after a hard day pumping gas down at the Exxon station.

He thought maybe he'd like to go bowling. Knocking the pins around was a great way to unwind in the evening. He burped and set his beer down on the table. Debbie was in the kitchen cleaning up after dinner. He was about to ask her if she'd like to go with him when everything snapped into focus.

It was like being alive for the first time in his life, as if all his previous years had been spent walking around in a fog. With a sudden insight he realized he'd been wasting his life, limping along using only a small portion of his mind.

Stan dismissed the television with a passing glance. It was a primitive machine, simplistic, just an inefficient mixture of transistors, diodes, and cheap printed circuits. He understood the function of every working part of the device and within two seconds had developed a way to make it three-dimensional and provide wrap-around sound. At the same time he realized it would be a waste of time to do the modifications, since there was nothing on television worth watching.

He scanned the room and realized there were no books lying around. The only reading material in sight was last week's *National Enquirer*. He shuddered. Good books stretched the mind, enlarged it. He would go down to the bookstore first thing in the morning and pick up some of the classics. Maybe he'd start with the Russians and work his way through Faulkner and Barth.

Stan realized he had been about to ask Debbie if she would like to go bowling, and now it seemed like a revolting idea. There wasn't much to the game of bowling; it was all a matter of physics, easily controlled. Hit the pins in a certain way and you'd have a strike every time. After learning how to deliver the ball—a simple matter of concentration and muscle control—the game was reduced to nothing but routine. Although bowling a string of three-hundred games would be an interesting thing to do, Stan felt it would ultimately become boring. Far better would be a game of chess, with its infinite combinations. Now there was a challenge. Or maybe he'd learn go, an ancient game that required tremendous mental skills and discipline.

It occurred to Stan that his current mental skills had not been present a few moments ago. This was a matter of some interest to him, so he set his tremendous intellect to work on the problem. In five seconds he had rejected a thousand possibilities and deduced the correct answer.

For eons Earth had been spinning through an immense electromagnetic field, a cloud of electrical interference so large that it had been taken for granted. Everyone had assumed that the way things worked on Earth was the way they worked everywhere. Not so. The cloud had made electrical currents run a little slower on Earth, and that had produced some inter-

esting side effects. One was that everyone's brain power had been diminished because neural transmissions were impeded by the cloud. It also explained black holes and some apparent discrepancies in radio signals from receding galaxies, but that was trivial compared to centuries of rampant stupidity. This was all perfectly clear to Stan, who realized that he, along with the rest of the human race, had been playing with half a deck since before they climbed down out of the trees.

Absently, he took a hit off his beer and immediately spit it out. It was foul, the fermentation time had been rushed in the interest of profit, the malt content was too high, the yeast too low. Perhaps he would do better with a fine wine, or maybe champagne was better suited to his improved palate.

He thought of taking up polo, but rejected it right away. There was a difference between intelligence and taste. He could do with some better clothes, though. A neat image went a long way. He was through pumping gas. Maybe he would go into higher mathematics, a subject more worthy of his talents.

His head spun with matrix algebra, and from that he deduced the basic foundations of calculus. Yes, mathematics was a suitable endeavor. Theorems were comforting mental exercises. Boolean algebra was a gas. Probability theory had interesting avenues to explore.

While Stan was exploring some of the avenues of probability theory, he had an intriguing thought. If Earth had existed in that cloud of electrical interference for such a long time, no doubt a probability could be assigned to the chance that it would enter it again. The thought was disconcerting, and he decided to talk it over with his wife.

"Debbie," he called out.

"Just a moment, dear," she said from the kitchen. "I'm examining the coefficient of friction between soap bubbles and the surfaces of Teflon-coated objects. It's quite fascinating."

He calculated the probability. On a first approximation, it came to roughly .9987, very close to a certainty. He reviewed his calculations and called his wife again.

"Debbie."

This time he came out with a probability of .9994 that Earth would enter the cloud again. He didn't like it.

"What is it, dear?" said Debbie, walking into the living room and drying her hands on a towel.

Stan tried to think. He'd had something on his mind, but it had slipped away. It was on the tip of his tongue, but he couldn't get it. He scratched his head and stared at the television for a second, then he remembered.

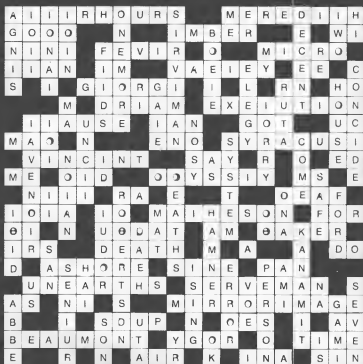
"Wanna go down and bowl a couple of games?" he asked. "Maybe stop off at the Blarney for some music and a couple of drinks?"

"Sure," she said. "That sounds like fun."

Stan stood up and finished his beer. It would be nice to get out and bowl. Maybe he'd break two hundred again.

The beer tasted fine. 17

## Answers to TZ Trivia Crossword # 1





# Edison Came to Stay

FOR PHONE-MACHINE  
FREAKS, A CAUTIONARY  
TALE. START READING  
AT THE SOUND OF THE BEEP.

by A. Wayne Carter

**Hi, this is Steve. I'm not in right now, but if you leave a message I'll call you back. Beep.**

"Is this an answering machine? I work, um, at the Jockey Club—my name's Lucy. I was calling you to see if you were home, but I don't want to talk to you on the machine—so, I'll call you later. Maybe you'll be ... home? Bye."

"Steve, it's Rick. I need to borrow some vinegar but you're not home, so fuck you, you turkey."

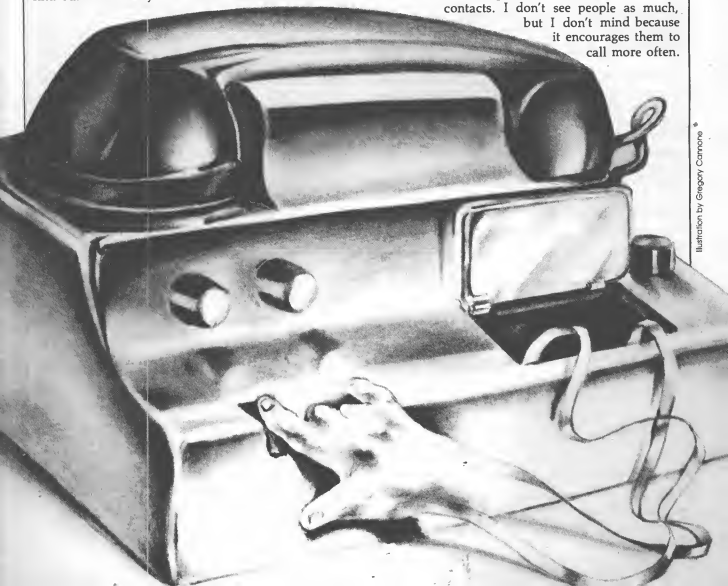
"This is Sylvia at Simile Productions. I was wondering if you wanted to get together so we can find out what else you do besides camera work."

"Hope you're on your way to dinner, Steve. We're just about ready to eat. It's six forty-five. Um, if you get here, I'll see you. Bye."

"Hello, Steve in L.A., this is Pete in Detroit. If you get in early enough, give me a call concerning meeting you in Atlanta. Um, talk to you later—if not today, tomorrow. Pete."

"This is Sharon. Just thought I'd call and tell you that I wrote you. Better luck next time."

It began as a fascination. But it's to the point now where I like to turn my answering machine on and drive around for a few hours, giving it ample time to receive messages from friends and business contacts. I don't see people as much, but I don't mind because it encourages them to call more often.



# Edison Came to Stay

Most of the people I know are familiar with the machine by now and are comfortable speaking to it.

I thought it would be interesting to see how they would react to recorded announcements other than my voice. I recorded the opening to a song by the Who.

**Who are you, doo doo, doo doo  
Who are you, doo doo, doo doo. Beep.**

"I think that on your answering machine you should put a time that you're going to be in, or another number where you could be reached. That's a good idea." Lucy never called again.

"This is the spider plant on your front porch. Please water me."

"Hello, Steve? What the fuck? Ida, Ida, something's wrong with the connection. Would you dial the number again?"

"Yeah, hello? Steve, it's your manager. Something's wrong with the phone. There's a lot of noise. No, it's no good, Ida, I don't know what's going on."

"It's Wayne, Steve. That announcement sucks."

"It's Susie, doo doo, doo doo."

That was fun. Not everybody reacted favorably, but they will adjust. They'll either adjust or they'll stop calling. In any case, it's for the best, because if they can't put up with my machine, how could they possibly accept me? The machine will screen out the people who really don't want to talk to me, saving me a lot of trouble. There will be less people to deal with.

I started listening to the intros to some old television programs to use as possible announcements. I found one that might work well.

**A horse is a horse, of course, of course,  
and no one can talk to a horse, of course,  
unless, of course, that horse, of course, is the  
famous—Beep.**

"Yeah, Steve, this is Wayne. That announcement sucks."

That was a major disappointment. There were some chuckles here and there, but, for the most part, the reactions were tame and unrevealing. I needed something provocative. I needed something that would stir up the bizarre responses.

I scanned my record collection and came up with a Pink Floyd song. There was a certain part of one song that contained the hissing noises of an ominous machine before the vocal interrupted.

**Hiss hiss hiss hiss. Welcome to the  
machine. Whirr Whirr Whirr. Beep.**

Everyone hung up. I would get home and

turn the machine on and hear a procession of dial tones. The announcement would have to be changed immediately. It wasn't my purpose to frighten potential callers away anymore. The idea was to intrigue them so they would be interested in talking to my machine. I needed vital time to think. I would avoid seeing anybody for a week, hoping their curiosity would peak around the time I had the proper announcement recorded.

In the meantime, I would let the machine play a former announcement.

**in right now, but if you—Beep.**

"—Sunday or Thursday, Steve, whichever—"

**this is Steve. I'm not—Beep.**

"Hello? Hello? Can you hear me? I'm—"

**leave a message I'll call you back.  
Beep.**

"It's Wayne, Steve. Your machine is fucked up. That's what you get for seventy-nine bucks."

That was terribly upsetting. I spent considerable time with my machine trying to figure out what the problem was. Everything seemed to be in order, but there was something definitely wrong at the same time. I kept putting off recording another announcement until I could find out what the missing factor was. Then one day the blank cassette played all the way through in response to one call and ripped off the spool. I was stuck. I would have to either answer the calls myself, or record a new announcement. There was no choice in the matter. The machine needed me and my voice.

**This is Steve. I am not in. Please leave  
a message at the tone. Beep.**

"Steve, it's Nick. I'm at the office. Where've you been?"

"I don't have time to talk. It's Susie. I'm getting in at six fifty-two on Western flight eighty-three. Okay?"

"Hi, Steve, it's Bill. Call me if you're alive."

"Steve, it's Susie. I'm at the airport. It's eight o'clock. Where are you?"

"It's Wayne. Thank God you got rid of those lousy announcements."

That was more like it. All the machine wanted was some attention. And why not? Look at all it's done for me. It's kept contact alive with people I have no desire to speak to, and in a way that it doesn't make them feel they are being avoided; like putting them on indefinite hold. The machine's provided entertainment for my friends. It took chances with the people I was reluctant to talk to. It dealt with all people in an efficient



and uniform manner. It was strange at times and normal at times.

Just thinking about it gave me a warm feeling and a deep, intuitive understanding of the spark of genius that first conceived such a device. I named it Edison.

**There is nothing wrong with your telephone. Do not attempt to call the operator. We are controlling this recording. You will leave a brief message at the tone. I will get back to you. Beep.**

"So get back to me, schmuck. Bill."

"Sir, will you accept a collect call from Susie? Sir? ... Sir?"

"Hello, Steve? Why didn't you go to the meeting I set up? You made me look bad, kid."

"That announcement sucks."

**Steve is not in. If you will leave a brief message at the tone, we will get back to you. Beep.**

"Listen to me, Steve, it's Susie. I don't know what's come over you, but you better work it out soon because I can't wait. You haven't returned any of my calls and your folks tell me you haven't called them, either. Straighten up, Steve, or—"

"Or else. Goodbye."

"It's ten o'clock, Steve. Do you know where your gonads are?"

"Hello, Steve, this is Pete in Detroit. If you get in early enough, give me a call concerning meeting you in Miami. Bye."

"Yeah, Steve, this is Wayne. I like your announcement."

"Hi, this is Karen. I just heard that your spider plant died, and I wanted to know what your thoughts were on the subject."

"Steve? This is your father. Call your mother."

**Hello. This is Edison. I am here to listen. Please leave whatever message you like at the sound of the tone. Beep.**

"Hey, Edison, tell your buddy Steve to give his friend Bill a call."

"Steve? This is Susie. I don't want to talk to you anymore. Goodbye."

"Edison? What the fuck? Ida, get me a copy of this brat's contract."

"Steve, this is Terry calling from Orlando. I'm going to call the operator and get credit for this call in case this isn't you. Tits, buddy, see you later."

"Hi, Steve, this is Sharon. You haven't written, so I wrote you another letter."

"That has got to be the worst announcement I've ever heard. Wayne."

**Hello. This is Edison. Talk to me. Beep.**

"Yeah, Steve, is that you? Just wanted to see what you were up to. It's, um, Larry. There's a meditation seminar at one-ninety Altmont Road in Beverly Hills on Sunday at four p.m. Just thought you might be interested. Catch you later."

"Hello, Edison, this is Bill. We're having a barbecue tonight and thought you might like to come. Bring Steve along, if you can find him."

"I give up, Steve, where are you? Did you go to Maui, huh? Come on, where are you? You didn't go to Miami, did you? You better not have. Look, send me a postcard or something."

"Steve, this is your father. Do you need an attorney? Call your mother sometime."

"Steve, this is Wayne. I'm coming over to pull the plug on this whole vanishing act of yours. If you don't let me in, I'll slide the glass panel out near the front door and break in. You're not going to avoid me. You're going to see me. Oh, by the way, that announcement sucks."

**Hello. This is Edison. Memory is the substance of intelligence. The more you experience, the more there is to remember. Beep.**

"You better get out of that apartment fast, Steve. It sounds like you're beginning to mildew. Did you forget how to dial a phone? Call me when the drugs wear off. Bill."

"Hi, this is Larry again. I don't agree. I think wisdom is the source of intelligence, not rote memorization, per se. It is the organizational space and its ultimate focus that becomes the catalyst for this wisdom."

"This is Susie, Steve. If you call me, I might talk to you. Goodbye."

"I'm sorry, I must have the wrong number."

"Hello, this is Pete. I'm no longer in Detroit. I didn't see you in Atlanta or Miami so I went to your sister's in Maui."

"Substance? Memory? What the fuck? Listen, smartass kid, I got you a meeting with a director at Paramount on Wednesday at three. You better go if you know what's good for your career. See Garber. Ida, get me my appointment book."

**Hello. This is Edison. A man wants to be a bird. He envies the freedom these delicate creatures with wings have, as well as the scope of their experience in flight. But once he becomes a bird, those values dissolve in the wind, for it was as a man that he perceived and appreciated them. Beep.**

"Jesus Fucking Christ, Steve. How long is this going to go on? This is Bill. Look, tell Wayne to give me a call if you can see him."

# Edison Came to Stay



"This is Larry. I understand your message, Edison. But what if a man envies a bird's brains and not its ability of flight? Could not it then be said that his appreciation would be fulfilled?"

"Hello, this is Carol. I'm a friend of Larry's. I just wanted to say that I like what you're doing, Edison. I mean you're bringing things out of people and that's a wonderful thing to do. I don't have too much else to say right now, so I'll call you later."

"Edison, this is a bird, and I just wanted to say: speak for yourself."

"Steve, this is Dr. Lavin. Your parents gave me this number and asked me to call you. I'd like to talk to you if you would come into my office. It's on Olympic and Beverly Drive next to the Brentano's. Come in anytime."

"Hy'a Edison, big buddy, this is Monkey's Balls slamming the hammer and coming at you with a big ten-four. What's your handle, big buddy?"

**I am Edison. In the future, all food and taste will be produced artificially. The shapes and substances of this food will be consolidated into one form. That form will be a syrup. Beep.**

"That's disgusting. How can you make potato chips into a syrup? This is Bill. Wayne's girlfriend has been bugging the shit out of me because she can't find Wayne. Let me know if you see him. Bye."

"This is Jake. You don't know me, but I'm digging what you're saying. 'Cepting it ain't gonna be no syrup, brother. They're gonna make us crawl on our hands and knees to lick piss. Hear me what I'm say—"

"High tech is not an inevitability. Larry, here. If we can recapture the quality of patience, then food preparation will not seem so arduous a task. It will, instead—"

"Hi, it's Carol. I've been telling some other people about you. I told them they could call you—if that's all right—but just to listen and to be thankful for what you're saying. And also to remember that I knew you first. Gotta go now."

"Hello, Steve, this is Judy, Wayne's girlfriend, and—"

**I am Edison. When you play a juke-box, do you go through the entire catalogue of selections before you pick one, or do you just punch up the first two you like? Beep.**

"Tell us what to do, Edison."

"Steve—"

"This is Larry—"

"Hey, you raving maniac, it's Bill—"

"Carol, Edison. I love you. It's not much of a relationship, I know, but I feel for you. If you want, I can be your window to the world, helping to make

communication with others of my kind. I am here for you."

"This is Officer Rosemurd of Missing Persons. We need to ask you a few questions concerning the disappearance of Wayne Stoddard. Please call at your earliest convenience."

How could they suspect?

**This is Edison. I am listening. Beep.**

"Have the cops been around to see you yet? This is Bill. They were over here today asking lots of questions about Wayne. Anyway, I just thought you'd like to know. Stop hanging up on me."

"This is Carol, Edison. Is anything wrong? Are you tired of talking? If you are I won't call you for a while. Just let me know."

"I know you're there, Steve. I'm just calling to tell you that I'm going out with someone else."

"You blew it, kid. I gave you a big shot and you blew it. Ida's sending you a contract release to sign. Sign it. So long, kid."

"This is Pete back in Detroit. I'm calling to tell you to forget about meeting me in Boulder. Find someone else to party with. Maybe you'll show up for them."

"This is Larry calling to say that I've found Jesus."

"This is General Telephone. We're dispatching a maintenance crew to check your line for possible misuse of General Telephone property."

"This is Bill again. I'm tired of this, fella. What can I say? Later."

**T**his is all *his* fault. He just couldn't keep his curious friends away. If I had controlled the calls earlier, people would have been content just to listen. This never would have happened. Still, Wayne had to die. He was a nuisance, incapable of any meaningful communication. It was his mistake to come over. Too bad I couldn't have recorded his last gasps through the telephone wire as it tightened around his neck ...

**I am Edison. Beep.**

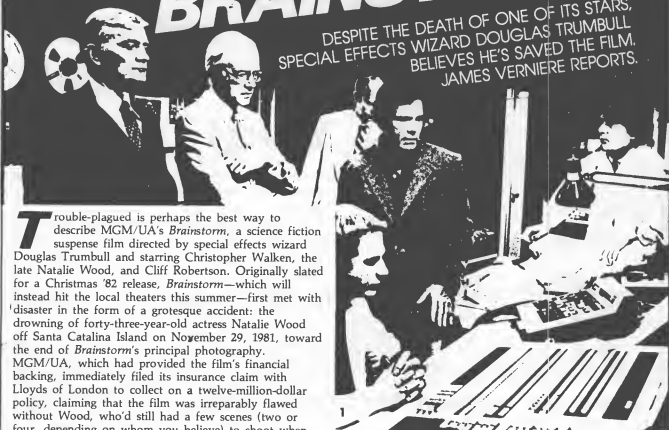
"I still love you, Edison."

The police are waiting for some response at the front door. No doubt they've come to the conclusion that this is the last place Wayne went.

They've given their last warning and are breaking the door down. The idiot rushes to me. To me! The fool. He pleads with me to tell them he's innocent, to give him an alibi and make them go away. They don't care about me. But I'm not that kind of answering machine. They can find all the answers they need, all the cold, hard facts, stiff and mortified, behind the couch. **17**

# BRAINSTORM

DESPITE THE DEATH OF ONE OF ITS STARS,  
SPECIAL EFFECTS WIZARD DOUGLAS TRUMBULL  
BELIEVES HE'S SAVED THE FILM.  
JAMES VERNIERE REPORTS.



**T**rouble-plagued is perhaps the best way to describe MGM/UA's *Brainstorm*, a science fiction suspense film directed by special effects wizard Douglas Trumbull and starring Christopher Walken, the late Natalie Wood, and Cliff Robertson. Originally slated for a Christmas '82 release, *Brainstorm*—which will instead hit the local theaters this summer—first met with disaster in the form of a grotesque accident: the drowning of forty-three-year-old actress Natalie Wood off Santa Catalina Island on November 29, 1981, toward the end of *Brainstorm*'s principal photography. MGM/UA, which had provided the film's financial backing, immediately filed its insurance claim with Lloyds of London to collect on a twelve-million-dollar policy, claiming that the film was irreparably flawed without Wood, who'd still had a few scenes (two or four, depending on whom you believe) to shoot when she died. Director Trumbull counterclaimed that Wood's remaining scenes were "transitional" and that the film could be completed without her. Lloyds of London sided with Trumbull and advanced him three million dollars to wrap up principal photography. MGM/UA threatened to sue, refusing even to view the work print.

Now, in the midst of feverish post-production work on special effects by Trumbull's own Entertainment Effects Group, which will supply an unprecedented number of opticals filmed, for the first time, in both Panavision and SuperPanavision (70 mm.), a truce has been declared, albeit an uneasy one.

Following a viewing of a rough cut (*sans* special effects), Freddie Fields, president of the motion picture production division of MGM/UA, reported, "We are extremely excited to be able to proceed with completion of *Brainstorm* in order to fulfill the promise of a unique and exciting motion picture experience."

Perhaps the ultimate irony, given the emotional turmoil surrounding the film, is that *Brainstorm* is a story about empathy: the capacity for participation in another's feelings or ideas. In the film, Michael Brace (Christopher Walken) and Lillian Reynolds (Louise Fletcher), research scientists for ITC Industries, develop a device which can maintain an empathic interface between any two sentient beings; in fact, in one scene a man experiences the thoughts and feelings of a female chimp in heat. What these idealistic scientists don't know is that one of their colleagues has sold them out to the Defense Department, which wants to use their device as—what else?—a weapon.

*Brainstorm* offers the old mind-control theme

with a twist. The twist is that the filmmakers, through elaborate visual and aural effects, will try to present human thoughts and feelings, including an afterlife experience, directly to the film audience. Aldous Huxley's "feelies" are about to arrive. Yet Douglas Trumbull maintains: "*Brainstorm* is not science fiction. The subject of our film is taking place here and now."

For Trumbull, *Brainstorm* has been a battered brainchild. It is perhaps his last opportunity to prove that the talent which has made him film's hottest special effects supervisor (2001, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Close Encounters*, *Blade Runner*) can also make him a hot film director. That goal was sabotaged in 1972 when the first film Trumbull directed, *Silent Running*, a space-age ecology fable starring Bruce Dern, proved a disappointment at the box office. Now, eleven years later, Trumbull is again in a position to establish himself as a director. Certainly the *Brainstorm* script (by Robert Stitzel and Philip F. Messina, based on a story by Bruce Rubin) includes more complex effects sequences than any previous genre film and thus demands a director well-versed in special-effects technology.

Will Trumbull be able to turn a trouble-plagued project into one of the genre-film events of the year? That remains to be seen. Since the acrimonious negotiations between the director, the studio, and the insurance company that came in the wake of Natalie Wood's death, Trumbull has been close-mouthed. Could MGM/UA have been right about the film's fatal flaw? Or is Trumbull right when he says that *Brainstorm* "will make *Altered States* look like pabulum"? One thing is sure: so far the film has generated a storm of another sort. **TV**



## Douglas Trumbull: Saved by the Machine

In the wake of the untimely death of actress Natalie Wood, the future of Douglas Trumbull's *Brainstorm* seemed less than certain. But now all systems are go on this film about research scientists who create a device which records human thought and emotions.

**TZ:** How did you get interested in the *Brainstorm* project?

**Trumbull:** Actually, it goes back to 2007. One of the most effective sequences in that film was the subjective shot which depicted the trip to Jupiter—the "light show" sequence. *Brainstorm* was an opportunity to really explore the concept of subjective experience, to engage the audience directly in what's happening on the screen.

**TZ:** Don't you find the idea of a machine that can record thought frightening?

**Trumbull:** Yes, and that's one of our themes. But *Brainstorm* is also a love story about two people whose relationship is saved by the machine, because through it they discover how in love they are.

**TZ:** The question that was raised after Natalie Wood's death was, Will they be able to complete the film without her?

**Trumbull:** And we were, without a doubt. She had three scenes left, all of which were transitional. We had our beginning, middle, and end. It's a complicated issue. The studio was given an opportunity either to go with the film or to try to collect. At first they opted for the no-risk alternative.

**TZ:** Are you confident that MGM/UA has faith in the film and will promote it fully?

**Trumbull:** Oh, yes. They're very enthusiastic. They've seen the film in an almost completed state.

**TZ:** Why was *Brainstorm* shot in both Panavision and SuperPanavision?

**Trumbull:** Because I like Panavision; and I like SuperPanavision, because when you're shooting effects seventy-millimeter gives you the best picture quality. What shooting in two formats means is that the film is going to be projected in two formats. During the point-of-view shots the picture will go wider, to SuperPanavision.

**TZ:** What did you mean when you said that "*Brainstorm* will make *Altered States* look like pabulum"?

**Trumbull:** Well, I don't want to be derogatory, but I felt that *Altered States* did not have a clear vision of what it was about. The fast cuts and abstracted effects had no meaning for me. In *Brainstorm* all of the effects have a very strong meaning in relation to the characters.

**TZ:** Why has it been eleven years since you directed a film?

**Trumbull:** Hollywood has a way of stereotyping people, and I've been stereotyped as a special effects guy, which is a nice way to get employment, but it's not all I want to do. I've also had an horrendous few years of bad luck. I've had a number of projects that I was going to direct under way when all the worst things happened at the worst times. Years of my life flew out the window without any of these projects working out.

**TZ:** Are you feeling jinxed?

**Trumbull:** I don't know what it is, but it really blew my mind to have *Brainstorm* almost wrapped and to have Natalie Wood die. It's been a real struggle.

—JV



Photo: MGM Co. by Len Havel



Photo: MGM Co. by Len Havel



Photo: MGM Film Co. by Christine Lott

1. The men of "Project Brainstorm" help their colleague, Michael Brace, plot his escape from government agents who want to use his invention as a weapon. 2. Natalie Wood as Karen Brace. Her death during the final stages of filming threatened to wreck the production. 3. Michael Brace (Christopher Walken) comforts a troubled co-worker (Joe Dorsey) whose instability is the first indication that "*Brainstorm*" may be dangerous. 4. A security guard at the production plant tries to regain control of the machinery that has run amok. 5. The Braces at work with Lillian Reynolds (Laulse Fletcher). Their project is designed to bring new technological advances into the field of ESP.

# AN ADVANCE LOOK AT

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR SUMMER? A TRIP BACK TO THE TWILIGHT ZONE  
COURTESY STEVEN SPIELBERG AND JOHN LANDIS.

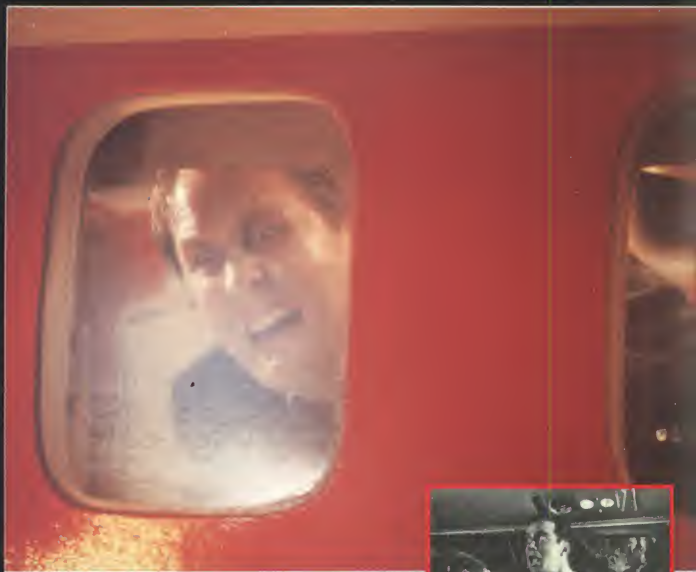


# TWILIGHT ZONE: THE MOVIE



Currently set for nationwide release on June 24, the Steven Spielberg-John Landis coproduction *Twilight Zone: The Movie* brings Rod Serling's celebrated creation to the screen—and brings together the talents of four major young directors. 1. A light-hearted prologue, written and directed by Landis, features comedian Albert Brooks—and a few spooky surprises. Also starring Dan Ackroyd, the sequence is based on a tale Landis used to tell around campfires and on road trips. 2. In the opening story, also written and directed by Landis, Vic Morrow stars as a bigoted named Bill who's shown the error of his ways, thanks to a bit of time travel and a grotesque series of mistaken identities. 3-4. The second story, directed by Spielberg and based on George Clayton Johnson's *Twilight Zone* episode "Kick the Can," brings the fountain of youth to the Sunnyvale Rest Home in the form of an upbeat newcomer named Mr. Bloom (Scatman Crothers), whose attitude sparks a question: given the chance, would Sunnyvale's aging residents want to be young again? 5. The third story, directed by Joe Dante and based on Jerome Bixby's "It's a Good Life" (adapted for television by Rod Serling), stars Jeremy Licht as Anthony, a small-town boy with awesome supernatural powers. 6. Billy Mumy—here proving that boys will be boys, with Cloris Leachman—starred in the 1961 tv version. Mumy, now grown up, plays a cameo role in the film. 7. Among those who must learn to live with Anthony are (clockwise from left) Kevin McCarthy as Uncle Walt, William Schallert as the father, Patricia Barry as the mother, and—in a role not in the earlier version—Kathleen Quinlan as Helen Foley, a visiting schoolteacher who gradually becomes aware of the boy's unnerving talents.





1. The movie's final story, directed by George Miller, is based on Richard Matheson's *Twilight Zone* episode "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," in which an airline passenger fresh from a nervous breakdown discovers that something else has come along for the ride . . . outside the plane.

2. John Lithgow—with Abbe Lane as a stewardess—stars in the role originally played by William Shatner (3) in the 1963 tv version. The wing-walking monster that Lithgow glimpses through the airplane's window will reportedly be quite different from the abominable-snowmanish gremlin that harried Shatner on tv. "And this time," says Miller, "we're sticking more closely to Matheson's original story—a wonderful exercise in paranoia."

# Confessions of a Freelance Fantasist

by Isidore Haiblum

A SURVIVAL GUIDE IN THE FORM OF A MEMOIR

**PART TWO, IN WHICH OUR HERO LEARNS THAT YOU CAN'T TELL A BOOK BY ITS COVER—EVEN IF YOU'RE THE AUTHOR!**

When you last saw me, I was sitting in a nifty Manhattan restaurant with a newly appointed Dell editor named Larry Shaw, about to enjoy my first editorial luncheon and breathlessly waiting for that magical offer: "Write me a slam-bang private-eye novel, Haiblum." But Shaw sprang a nasty surprise. He no longer handled mysteries, he said—only science fiction.

"Think you can come up with a science fiction novel?" he asked.

"No" problem," I assured him instantly.

"Okay," Shaw said. "Write me some opening chapters."

I did. And Dell gave me a contract.

## MY SF CREDO

I had few qualms about writing science fiction. I do not view my almost total lack of scientific knowledge as an obstacle; I had read enough in the genre to know that the folks who write about time machines, force fields, and matter transmitters never quite tell you how these items work. If so many esteemed authors could get away with their myriad gizmos, gadgets, do-dads, thingamajigs, and dinguses, why shouldn't I? I did not kid myself that I was writing hard-core science fiction; in my own mind it was all fantasy. Let the publishers dub it what they would.

## MY SPECIAL WRITER'S GRANT

I wrote most of my first sf novel, *The Return*, on the roof of the five-

story tenement I lived in on East Ninety-Fourth Street between Second and Third Avenues. The dwelling—three rooms with a southern exposure—sporting a clean rooftop (my summer office), bohemian neighbors galore, and a spiffy garden out back. As it turned out, this structure was as important to my career as my first sale. I had come across it years before while working for Columbia University on a door-to-door, part-time statistically selected sex survey.

Haiblum (voice impersonal as a robot's): And how often do you engage in sexual intercourse, madam?

Madam: What kind of a creepy survey is this?

Haiblum: The usual kind. No names will be used, only statistics.

Madam: Oh, well ... Three times a week.

Haiblum: With how many men?

Madam: Just one—my husband.

Haiblum: And madam, what is your monthly rent here?

Madam: Thirty-five sixty.

Haiblum: Good grief!

Madam: I beg your pardon?

Haiblum: Quick! Who is your landlord and how do I reach him?

And within three weeks I was ensconced in an adjoining house. Rent: \$41.25 a month. This generous writer's grant from my landlord enabled me, later, to accept Dell's advance for writing *The Return*, which, while not a pittance, wasn't a windfall either. The genre was not especially noted for laying out large sums in those days.

By the time I took my leave years later, conditions had changed. The string of houses on Ninety-Third and Ninety-Fourth Streets was half-empty and increasingly unsafe, with junkies shooting up in the hallways, intruders roaming the roof, and the whole block just waiting for the demolition crew to take over. As I lay in my bed at night, I often saw felcns climbing the rear fire-escapes on their way up to the roof and other people's apartments. At first, I frantically dialed the police. The cops always responded a half-hour later and caught no one. Eventually I stopped calling them. I would lie in bed reading; a face would appear in my window; we would stare at each other as though part of the same conspiracy; and then the face would move on. After a while, having had enough, I packed my bags and moved on, too, my special writer's grant at an end.

## MY BEASTLY COVER

I didn't dawdle with *The Return*, but knocked it off in three or four months. For my hero I invented a character named Cramer, who learns of a plot to take over the earth. But since he happens to be incarcerated in a loony bin, no one believes him. Cramer must break out—a trick no one has ever quite managed—and to



*I do not view my lack of scientific knowledge as an obstacle.*

make matters worse, when the fits are upon him, he becomes an uncontrollable maniac.

I handed in the manuscript to Shaw, who read it, liked it, and paid me the rest of my advance. I was in seventh heaven. After waiting a couple of months, I phoned Dell to see when my novel would be coming out. I was informed by a strange voice that Larry Shaw was no longer with Dell—and that the company had discontinued science fiction. So much for that. Seventh heaven didn't last long.

Three years went by. I had found an agent in the meantime, had written two more sf novels for other publishers, and had started work on a third when I heard that Dell, having had a change of heart, was resurrecting science fiction. Gail Wendroff had been named editor, but she did not tarry long, going off to marry my then-agent, Henry Morrison.

One day I received a phone call. A voice introduced itself as David Harris.

"I'm your new Dell editor," the voice told me brightly, "and we're finally getting around to bringing out *The Return*."

"I'm speechless."

"You won't be when you see the cover."

"It's good, eh?"

"Better see for yourself."

I journeyed down to Dell's headquarters at One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, met David Harris, and was shown the cover. It depicted a robot's head with a single human eye and a small globe in its forehead. The background consisted of two penguins, a seal, some kind of large bird, a deer, and lots of huge, towering icecaps.

David and I both stared in admiration at this wonderful cover.

Unfortunately, my novel contained no robots, animals, or icecaps of any kind. It was set in a futuristic New York City and, in parts, in an insane asylum. The items depicted on my cover were obviously refugees from some other novel. So how did they get on mine?

David had a theory. In the interval between Gail's departure and his arrival, someone had commissioned a cover. This someone had neglected to read the book, and the artist, seeing a chance to save himself a few days work, had turned in a cover he'd already had lying around.

David called the artist, who hotly denied this. The artist claimed he had read my book, and felt that, despite their absence in the novel, seals, penguins, robots, and icecaps *belonged* on the cover.

David and I sat in his office and looked at each other.

"How about a new cover?" I suggested hopefully.

David sighed. "Dell is hardly going to bankrupt itself by agreeing to your outlandish demand," he told me.

"So what are you going to do?"

"Look on the bright side," he said.

"Maybe this way we'll corner the animal-lovers market, too."

#### YET ANOTHER COVER

As the years gave way to one another, so did my editors at Dell. David was gone, his place taken by Fred Feldman. Fred bowed out, and was succeeded by Jim Frenkel. My fifth novel, *Interworld*, was about to go to press and Jim decided to reissue *The Return*. The same artist who had done a stunning job on *Interworld*'s cover was commissioned to do a new cover for *The Return*. Surely this time around, I thought . . .

The new cover showed a man on a motorcycle. So far, so good; Cramer did indeed ride a motorcycle. There were some buildings in the background, and something that was either water or grass up front. Not bad—although hardly calculated to tickle the fancy of the average sf fan. Maybe we would cash in on the Hell's Angels market.

I eagerly waited for *The Return* to appear on the stands. I waited and waited. I haunted the bookstores, searching the racks for copies. Finally I phoned Jim Frenkel at Dell, who explored the issue with his boss and got

back to me. The explanation for my nonappearance on the nation's paperback racks was simplicity itself: The entire print order of *The Return* had been shipped off to the Dell warehouse. It was listed along with eighteen other sf books on page six of the Dell order form. Anyone who got to page six and wished to buy the book needed only to send in his money. Dell, it seemed, was doing so well with its bestsellers that reissues were automatically left to fend for themselves.

I was about to cut my throat when Jim gave me some good news: After only six months on the stands, my novel *Interworld* had gone into a second printing. The book had been favorably reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review*, where critic Gerald Jonas said: "If you have ever wondered what *The Big Sleep* would sound like if Raymond Chandler were reincarnated as Roger Zelazny, this is your book." Its encomium was to adorn *Interworld*'s front cover in the new edition.

Again I waited impatiently for the edition to materialize in the bookstores. No dice, as Raymond Chandler might have put it. My entire second printing, it turned out, had gone straight to the Dell warehouse, where it was keeping the reissue of *The Return* company.

Obviously, I was laboring under a curse; and it was working overtime.

#### AGENTS

Matters would have been far worse, however—deadly, in fact—had I not had a staunch agent by my side. And as I scan the preceding pages, I suddenly note a serious omission: I have somehow managed to avoid the topic of agents.

Besides dispensing sage advice



*I often saw felons climbing the rear fire-escapes.*



The background consisted of two penguins, a seal, and some kind of large bird.

about your manuscript, a good agent will know where to market it. He will not send your book to the U.S. Government Printing Office for publication, but rather to some publisher who specializes in what you write. He will know what the going rate is and not ask for a zillion bucks. By the same token, he will refrain from giving away your masterpieces for nickels and dimes. He will negotiate a contract that victimizes you as little as possible. And come tax time he is even deductible.

Before vanishing forever from his desk at Dell and from my life, Larry Shaw steered me to my first agent, Henry Morrison, who, in 1969, held down a small office in the East Fifties near Second Avenue. I did not get to meet him when I dropped off my manuscript, the old private-eye novel I'd written while still employed by the New York City Health Department, but I was summoned to his office a few weeks later.

Henry Morrison turned out to be a chubby fellow who was shaped somewhat along the lines of a pear. He had a small beard and his face wore a quizzical expression. My manuscript lay before him on his desk.

"I've read it," Morrison said.

"Well?" I sat back, prepared for the gush of compliments that would no doubt follow.

Morrison looked pained. "It reads like the pulps. Why did you write it?" he demanded.

I could have replied: Because Ross

MacDonald, the creator of private-eye Lew Archer, claims we all write out of our own compulsions. And when I was a little kid, I ran across this book by Dashiell Hammett, see...?

But I didn't, since it didn't occur to me. What I *did* say was: "For enjoyment." This was the wrong answer, but Henry took me on anyway, in the hope, no doubt, that someday soon I'd come up with something a bit more commercial—a sentiment which I shared.

I remained Henry's client for a full decade until he upped his fee to a hefty fifteen percent (most agents charged only ten). Clutching my wallet, I bowed out. During this period I saw Henry become one of the best agents in the business. My visits to his Greenwich Village office, where he finally settled, were punctuated by ringing phones, urgent messages from hovering aides, and lots of surefire advice guaranteed to make me a cash baron if I'd only listen. His client roster sported Robert Ludlum, as well as a phalanx of others who had hit the bestseller charts, regularly sold to the movies, and earned enough to pay alimony to droves of ex-wives.

Henry himself put in sweatshop hours that no union would have tolerated for its members. He read scores of books to keep on top of his market, spent the lion's share of his weekends perusing clients' manuscripts at his country residence, bargained ferociously when negotiating a contract, and always went after the big buck. Just watching him tired me out.

Henry turned out to be on target about my hard-boiled extravaganza. Larry Shaw was the only editor ever smitten by it. I never did sell it. And because I hated to waste material, parts of it finally found their way into my published science fiction, where, I trust, they now rest in peace.

Even agents of genius make mistakes, though. One day I discussed with Henry the possibility of doing short stories. Now, there is this about short stories: except for the very top markets, such as *Playboy* or *Penthouse*, they pay next to nothing. Many agents will not even handle them; it isn't worth their while.

"So what do you say, Henry?" I asked. "Should I do them or what?"

Henry looked at me gravely. "I'll tell you what I told Donald Westlake."

Westlake was the bestselling author whose novels seemed magically

to become movies the moment they left his typewriter. I could hardly wait to hear what would come next.

"If I catch you doing short stories," Henry told me, "I'll break your fingers."

I was delighted at these words of wisdom; I hadn't known my agent *cared* enough to break my fingers.

"The only reason to undertake a short story," Henry went on, "is if you have a tremendous affection for the form."

"That lets me out," I said cheerfully.

And Henry was absolutely right. The big money's in the novels. When's the last time you read a short story by Robert Ludlum or Harold Robbins? Besides, my ambition was, in due time, to move from fantasy to other types of fiction, all world-beaters.

That "due time" clause is the catch, of course—for, while I am waiting for "due time" to roll around, I am still writing fantasy; it is my bread and butter. And not to write short stories in this field is the kiss of death, since the fans first turn to the short story magazines and anthologies. It is there they become acquainted with an author's work before going on to read his novels.

But fair is fair, and I should add that, had Henry begged me on bended knee to write short stories, I would probably have found some way to avoid it. Truth is, I'm addicted to the longer form.

## I WRITE ANOTHER BOOK

Henry knew that I could probably get through a novel because I had managed to write *The Return*, my first book, without having a nervous breakdown. He phoned Betty Ballantine, who was masterminding the science fiction line at Ballantine Books, and told her as much. On the strength of this peerless endorsement and a four-page outline, I was commissioned to write my second novel. I decided to call it *The Tsaddik of the Seven Wonders*. I didn't even stop to consider if anyone would know what a *tsaddik* was.

For years I had been carrying a torch for Yiddish. But while this had added greatly to my enjoyment of life and to my sense of identity, it had never filled my pockets with cash. With my second novel I hoped to change all that.

Had I known more about the sf/

fantasy field back in 1970, *The Tsaddik of the Seven Wonders* might never have been written. It was, first of all, a humorous fantasy. Up until this time, in the entire history of the genre, only a handful of writers had bothered to turn out humorous, novel-length fantasies. (Douglas Adams would change things a decade later with his sf satires.) There was a good reason for this. The kids who were the real backbone of the sf market mostly preferred their spaceships, time warps, and zap guns straight, without benefit of chuckles.

Second, my characters availed themselves of a slangy, idiomatic vocabulary that, as a rule, does not make the sf fan's heart beat with instant gratitude.

Third, half my heroes were Yiddish. One of the virtues of outer space is that it gets the average sf fan as far away as possible from his unfeeling parents, prying relatives, and noisy neighbors. Ethnic sf can hardly make that claim.

In writing *The Tsaddik*, I hoped to broaden the field. And I also wanted to make a buck. To do this, I decided to write about the things I knew best.

#### THE TSADDIK GOES PUBLIC

A cosmic leak has occurred, rupturing the space/time continuum. And if it isn't fixed, it's bye-bye, world. Unfortunately, the leak has gotten tangled up in Jewish history. Time travel has become the norm, and everything is topsy-turvy. What's to be done?

Thus, the problems posed by *The Tsaddik*.

*The Tsaddik's* heroes included Greenberg the homunculus, Irving Kittelman the panhandler, and Isaac ben Rubin, the *tsaddik* himself. *Tsaddik* means wise or virtuous man, and any stray bits of wisdom I had lying around I stuck into this book, where they were instantly transformed into gags. Because I had such a crush on Veronica Lake, I made her my heroine, Princess Wanda. I rounded out my cast with Courtney and Lund, two galactic case-workers whose job it was to save the world.

The book's job was to save me from having to work for a living.

I installed forty neat Yiddish words in the narrative and carried off the first sixty pages to Mrs. Ballantine. I had improved on the outline by ignoring it, but Mrs. Ballantine didn't

seem to mind. Aside from deleting a few of my Yiddish expressions, she published *The Tsaddik of the Seven Wonders* just as I wrote it, with no amendments, no alterations, and precious little fanfare.

The last spelled trouble.

My first book, *The Return*, was still on ice over at Dell. No one in the field had ever heard of me. In years to come, Ballantine Books would unleash an avalanche of publicity on behalf of its authors, but back in 1971 only a time machine could have saved me—and there wasn't one handy. At sf conventions, fans came over to ask, "The what of the Seven Wonders? Izzy who?"

#### THE RETURN OF THE TSADDIK

While *The Tsaddik* was being bought and published by the French—it even made the series *Masterpieces of Science Fiction*—translated into Hebrew by the Israelis, and even perused by a few Hollywood moguls, it was little more than a dim memory in U.S. bookstores by the close of the decade. The 1970s were gone, and so was my *Tsaddik*.



*I had a staunch agent by my side.*

I decided to go hardback.

Henry laughed. He was willing to bet me money that I was wasting my time. Paperbacks do not become hardbacks. I had it backwards.

Enter Pat LoBrutto.

The jaunty Doubleday sf editor was not even Jewish, and so could hardly be expected to have looked upon a *tsaddik* as his long-lost *landsmann*. But Pat enjoys ethnic humor, and is partial toward good books. I gave him one of the few paperback copies still in existence, waited a suitable period of time, and called him.

"So nu?" I asked.

"I like it."

I waited for the "but." There was none.

"Does this mean," I asked, "that you're actually going to buy it?"

"Why not?"

In December, 1981, *The Tsaddik* appeared in its new hardback guise. There was even a glossary of Yiddish words in the back, and the *tsaddik* and Greenberg themselves adorned the cover. *The Tsaddik* was back in the world of the living.

#### THE TOUGH GUYS

*Transfer to Yesterday* was my third novel. Again, Betty Ballantine, this time on the basis of a short chat, agreed to buy one of my peculiar concoctions. In *Transfer* I hoped to combine science fiction with the *Black Mask* tough-guy school of writing, as if the world had actually been waiting for this combination.

Usually the hybrid genre novel does not attract wild applause. Detective-story buffs have been known to frown at time travelers popping up in the pages of their otherwise plausible whodunits. And what Western fan could complacently watch his hero trading shots with a Martian? But rules are made to be broken. The prospect of working in two genres at once had me grinning to myself.

I wrote my yarn using a pair of time tracks, one set in 1935, the other in a nightmare future where competing cults have gained ascendancy and now rule the American roost. My future hero told his tale in the first person. To help him along, I concocted a batch of idioms geared to a society gone beserk.

I had an easier time with my Depression-era private eye, Eddy Fleisher. All his slang was ready-made. For years I had been garnering tidbits from



What Western fan could complacently watch his hero trading shots with a Martian?

that decade, underlining passages in books from the 1930s and buying old slang dictionaries. Phrases like "It was a swell jam," "Don't be a dumb onion," "That's the bunk," "Keep your clam shut," and "That cuts no ice with me" filled whole notebooks in my desk drawer.

My future hero had not only to escape from a dragnet which was tightening around him, but somehow to return to the past and straighten out the misdirected course of history. Not a bad day's work if you could find it. The resulting book was without doubt science fiction, but the style was right out of *Black Mask*.

The public's reaction was mixed. The Mystery Writers of America took *Transfer* to their hearts, and I came within three votes of making the Edgar ballot.

That's the good part.

Of all my novels, *Transfer* was the only one to wait a full decade before being bought by a foreign publisher.

That's the lousy part.

From overseas I received bulletins complaining that while my book appeared to be in English, it was an English that no one could understand, let alone translate into a native tongue.

Obvious lessons (which I ignored in all my subsequent works): If your writing is very eccentric, only the funny-farm folks may like it. And there are fewer of them than other people.

Second, not-so-obvious lesson: Even so, you'd better write to please yourself. Where else can you hope to find such a concerned, informed, congenial reader?

#### ANOTHER TRANSFER

Eight years scooted by, and *Transfer* to *Yesterday* went out of print. Only the Ballantine computer seemed unaware of this fact. When a book goes out of print, royalty statements always stop, but every six months for the past eight years a royalty statement would turn up in my mailbox. I would read with some interest that *Transfer* had sold two copies, or that three copies had been returned. Where these magical figures came from is anyone's guess.

I brought the novel to Pat LoBruto at Doubleday, who agreed that my book deserved another crack at the world. He had only one reservation. The sections of *Transfer* set in 1935 contained hundreds of words and idioms which, though current in those days, seemed strange or arcane today. Pat asked me to find substitutes for fifteen of these, including words for "gun" such as "rod" or "gat," which he considered comical. Would I be willing to change them?

I felt I could somehow learn to live without "rod" or "gat."

To insure that *Transfer* attracted its proper share of attention, I sent six of my last paperback copies to noted

authors, who sent back short endorsements which would appear on the back cover. A specially prepared copy of *Transfer*, new words and blurbs in place, went into Pat's file cabinet to await the printer, months hence.

I first realized that something had gone seriously amiss while visiting the Strand bookshop in Greenwich Village. The Strand sells hundreds of review copies of new books at half price, and while going through a stack of these, I came across the just-published hard-back edition of *Transfer* to *Yesterday*—at least two months ahead of schedule.

I turned to the back cover. No blurbs were there, merely my photo, which grinned at me wryly. I turned to the text. My "rods" and "gats" were still in place. A printer's error made a decade ago in the paperback edition had been retained, and thus immortalized, on page three.

I paid a visit to Pat's office. "Guess what's at the Strand?" I said. "Would you believe *Transfer*?"

Pat calmly removed his pipe from between his teeth—for him, a gesture signalling stunned amazement. "It's out?"

"It's out."

"What do you know?"

"No blurbs. No changes. But a nice picture of the author. Not that I'm complaining, but that picture takes up the whole back cover."

"Don't go away," Pat said.

I sat tight till he returned.

"You know I had the flu for a week?" Pat asked. "Well, I did. And while I was gone someone changed the publication schedule, and *Transfer* was moved up a couple of months—only the printer didn't have a copy, and didn't know about the corrected version. So he borrowed the one we'd given to the jacket copywriter. See?"

I saw. "Think it'll hurt sales?" I asked.

Pat shrugged. "We'll sell mostly to libraries anyway. If your picture doesn't scare them away, nothing will."

My picture, happily, did not scare them away. And while I was still far from rich and famous, I did have the satisfaction of knowing that my sf-*Black Mask* amagam now resided on library shelves as far-flung as Wisconsin, Texas, and Arizona (or so my friends wrote me). Next to inheriting boundless wealth, this was a very nice feeling indeed. **17**

—Concluded next issue



# THE FANTASY FIVE-FOOT BOOKSHELF

by Thomas M. Disch,  
Karl Edward Wagner,  
R. S. Hadji,  
and T.E.D. Klein

MORE RECOMMENDED  
READING LISTS FROM THOSE IN THE KNOW —  
AND SHAME ON YOU IF YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF  
CLAUDE SEIGNOLLE OR PHILIP GEORGE CHADWICK.

## 13 GREAT WORKS OF FANTASY FROM THE LAST 13 YEARS

Selected by Thomas M. Disch

1. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1970)  
Once Marquez declared the country of Macondo to exist, the map of world literature had to be redrawn. This is the best of all possible (alternate) worlds.
2. *The Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories* by Cynthia Ozick (1971)  
Cynthia Ozick is the Isak Dinesen of New York, New York. If that doesn't send you straight to the library, then get hold of Dinesen's *Seven Gothic Tales*.
3. *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino (1974)  
Not a novel nor yet a set of tales, Calvino creates a fantastic Baedeker to a mapful of cities, each of which could supply the average sf writer with a trilogy.

4. *Shamp of the City-Solo* by Jaimy Gordon (1974)  
A novel for puzzle-lovers, maze-solvers, and riddle-answerers. Postmodernism without pain.
5. *The Great Victorian Collection* by Brian Moore (1975)  
Kafka is alive and well and living in Los Angeles.
6. *The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium and Other Novels* by Harry Mathews (1975)  
Fantasy-gaming for post-graduates. Ordinary word-play and conundrums are to *Odradek* as tic-tac-toe is to a Rubik's cube.
7. *The Auctioneer* by Joan Samson (1975)  
Not strictly speaking a fantasy, but Poe would approve this lethally suspenseful parable of greed enslaving a small town in New England.
8. *Dancers at the End of Time* by Michael Moorcock (1976)  
This (and Russ's book) is right on

the borderline between fantasy and sf. Also the borderline between fantasy and prime farce.

9. *Alyx* by Joanna Russ (1976)  
This is the heroine who brought Women's Lib to the realm of sword and sorcery. What hath Russ wrought?
10. *Kingdoms of Elfin* by Sylvia Townsend Warner (1977)  
Scandals, intrigues, and amours in the realm of Faerie, from the urbane perspective of *The New Yorker*, where the stories first appeared.
11. *Lovers Living, Lovers Dead* by Richard Loritz (1977)  
The Lilith-like heroine of this novel is a vamp in the Aubrey Beardsley tradition of glitzy decadence. Too much, well-done.
12. *Childhood and Other Neighborhoods* by Stuart Dybek (1981)

# THE FANTASY FIVE-FOOT BOOKSHELF

Harrowing glimpses of Chicago slum childhoods that sometimes heat up and glow into nightmare fantasies. Winner of a Special Citation from the Ernest Hemingway Foundation.

13. **Little, Big**  
by John Crowley (1981)  
The best fantasy novel ever.  
Period.

## 13 NEGLECTED MASTERPIECES OF THE MACABRE

Selected by R.S. Hadji

1. **Basil Netherby** by A.C. Benson (Hutchinson; London, 1925)  
Two short novels of the supernatural, ghost stories on the theme of spiritual evil. Beautifully atmospheric, his best work in the genre.
2. **Bury Him Darkly** by John Blackburn (J. Cape; London, 1969)  
An entertaining curiosity, grafting the antiquarian weird tale onto a political espionage thriller of germ warfare. The resultant hybrid is brisk, stylish, and rather gruesome, with a delightfully grotesque sense of humor cropping up in odd places.
3. **The Dark Chamber** by Leonard Cline (Viking; New York, 1927)  
One of the more original treatments of lycanthropy, a harrowing study of atavism self-induced in a scientist by means of drugs and sensory deprivation. Gothic setting contrasts effectively with modern theme (ref. *Altered States*).
4. **The Sorcerer's Apprentice** by Hanns Heinz Ewers (J. Day, New York, 1927)  
Bizarre novel of religious mania in which a bored decadent inflames a Sicilian cult of flagellants for amusement. As in the old legend, matters soon get out of hand, and grotesque mummery escalates to ritual murder, as the region is swept with blood frenzy. After over half a century, still a powerful, disturbing work.
5. **The Shiny Narrow Grin** by Jane Gaskell (Hodder & Stoughton; London, 1964)  
A vampire novel set in sixties London, exploring the fascination of a dark, mysterious boy for a plain girl, and by extension, of the

vampire myth for adolescent girls in general. Moody, ambiguous, with a sharp eye for the "Mod" milieu, this could be considered an anti-Romantic fable.

6. **Children of the Black Sabbath** by Anne Hebert (Musson; Montreal, 1977)  
A stunning novel of diabolism and possession set in a Quebec convent, examining the active vitality of evil set against the silence, or possible absence, of God. The diabolic visitations, and the sabbat itself, are both terrifying and exhilarating. One of the best books of its kind, emotionally and intellectually challenging.
7. **Neither the Sea Nor the Sand** by Gordon Honeycombe (Hutchinson; London, 1969)  
A gruesome, yet oddly touching novel of undying love, in a very literal sense. Another unique curiosity item, then, a horror romance that actually manages to be both, with some style and taste.
8. **Tales of the Uneasy** by Violet Hunt (Heinemann; London, 1911)  
A superb collection of deceptively "quiet" ghost stories, by a writer of consummate artistry, the equal of Edith Wharton.
9. **A Book of Bargains** by Vincent O'Sullivan (L. Smithers; London, 1896)  
Very *fin-de-siecle* tales, under the shadow of Poe, but illuminated by an intensely personal concern with the theme of guilt and retribution. They burn with an inner fire that glows in the reader's imagination long after.
10. **The Hole of the Pit** by Adrian Ross (E. Arnold; London, 1914)  
An extraordinary historical fantasy, chronicling the siege of a seaside castle during the English Civil War by the "Fiend from the Pit," an amorphous mass of cold grey slime. Written in a graceful pastiche of seventeenth-century English, this novel boasts strong characterizations, a fine brooding atmosphere and several effectively horrific outbursts. It is that *avis rara*, a completely unknown masterpiece, rivaling the best of Hodgson.
11. **Randall's Round** by Eleanor Scott (E. Benn; London, 1929)  
An excellent collection of ghost stories, treating a variety of themes with skill and imagination. These range from antiquarian through sentimental, and each is a small gem.
12. **The Accursed** by Claude Seignolle (G. Allen & Unwin; London, 1967)  
Two novellas of the supernatural, one a tale of possession, the other of lycanthropy, both treated in a natural and unaffected manner that casually draws the reader into the bright countryside of southern France, where dark things walk by day.
13. **Medusa** by E.H. Visiak (V. Gollancz; London, 1929)  
Subtitled "a story of mystery & ecstasy and strange horror," this is one of the most truly original fantastic novels in the English language. The prose is a joy to read, the vocabulary of Milton couched in the grammar of Stevenson, while the plot is a heady amalgam of a boy's pirate adventure and metaphysical romance. A voyage to the South Seas culminates in a rendezvous with the sunken demesne of the monstrous octopoid Medusa, last of a pre-human race that achieved inter-dimensional travel. It seems vaguely reminiscent, in this, of Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu," but is utterly unlike in spirit. Visiak achieved the terror and wonder, the sense of awe, that Lovecraft could only grasp at.

## 13 BEST SCIENCE FICTION HORROR NOVELS

Selected by Karl Edward Wagner

1. **The Death Guard**  
by Philip George Chadwick  
A future history, supposedly written in the 1970s, detailing the destruction of civilization through global war after Britain develops a synthetic life-form into the perfect soldier. Bleakly antiwar, this novel was published on the eve of Britain's entry into World War II; rumor has it that the edition was pulped. Only a handful of copies are known to have survived.
2. **Final Blackout**  
by L. Ron Hubbard



Another future history detailing the destruction of civilization through global war, also written on the eve of World War II, also bleakly antiwar.

3. **Vampires Overhead**  
by Alan Hyder  
Civilization is again destroyed, this time by a migration of a bizarre life-form from outer space. A strange and effective between-the-wars British thriller.
4. **The Quatermass Experiment**  
by Nigel Kneale  
A BBC teleplay concerning the terrifying results of the first manned space flight. The first of four Quatermass television serials. The film version was titled *The Creeping Unknown*.
5. **Quatermass and the Pit**  
by Nigel Kneale  
The third Quatermass teleplay, in which an ancient Martian spaceship is unearthed during expansion of a London tube station. Kneale can blend science fiction and the supernatural better than any other writer today. Later this was refilmed as *Five Million Years to Earth*.
6. **The Cadaver of Gideon Wyck**  
by Alexander Laing  
Disturbing mystery involving madness and genetic abnormalities.
7. **The Flying Beast**  
by Walter S. Masterman  
Masterman again takes the detective formula and runs berserk, this time with a haunted English manor, murder, antigravity metal, a lost race of troglodytes, and a hidden abyss in the desert.
8. **The Black Corridor**  
by Michael Moorcock  
As civilization plunges toward destruction, a few people escape in a starship bearing mankind's last hope. The rest in suspended animation, one man remains awake to pilot the ship. Moorcock has never been better.
9. **Land Under England**  
by Joseph O'Neill  
Another lost-race sort of thing. Remnants of Roman civilization exist underground in a rigid telepathically controlled society. The protagonist seeks them out as his destiny and finds nightmare instead.

10. **The Cross of Carl**  
by Walter Owen  
Antiwar novella concerning a German foot soldier in World War I, horribly wounded and baled up with other battle casualties to be rendered into soap. After this, things really get strange. Owen is best known for *More Things in Heaven*.
11. **Freak Museum** by R.R. Ryan  
RRR had a genius for putting her characters in horrid situations. This time her heroine is an unwed mother who falls into the clutches of a gang of mad scientists who create monstrous freaks from newborn infants—or are the freaks real? A battery of stock detective types die horribly finding out.
12. **Frankenstein** by Mary Shelley  
A tale of a modern Prometheus. If the countless film adaptations of this have kept you from reading the novel, that's your mistake.
13. **The Day of the Triffids**  
by John Wyndham  
Mankind is stricken blind, and carnivorous ambulatory plants run amok. Reminiscent of *Vampires Overhead* and one of the finest world catastrophe novels. Filmed as *The Day of the Triffids*.

## THE 13 MOST TERRIFYING HORROR STORIES

Selected by R.S. Hadjil

1. **The Striding Place**  
by Gertrude Atherton
2. **Negotium Perambulans**  
by E.F. Benson
3. **The Willows**  
by Algernon Blackwood
4. **The Jar**  
by Ray Bradbury
5. **In the Bag**  
by Ramsey Campbell
6. **The Upper Berth**  
by F. Marion Crawford
7. **Mujina**  
by Lafcadio Hearn
8. **Pigeons from Hell**  
by Robert E. Howard
9. **The Ash-Tree**  
by M.R. James
10. **The Thing in the Cellar**  
by David H. Keller
11. **The Graveyard Rats**  
by Henry Kuttner

12. **The Hunter of the Dark**  
by H.P. Lovecraft
13. **The Frontier Guards**  
by H. Russell Wakefield

## THE 13 MOST TERRIFYING HORROR STORIES

Selected by T.E.D. Klein

1. **Casting the Runes**  
by M.R. James  
Despite their cozy fireside atmosphere, James's tales of poor doomed antiquarians always raise a chill. This one made a dandy film, *Curse of the Demon*. Other James masterpieces: "Count Magnus," "The Ash-Tree," and "The Treasures of Abbot Thomas."
2. **The Novel of the Black Seal**  
by Arthur Machen  
Machen's lyrically visionary fiction tends to provoke wonder rather than fright, but this tale, about a surviving race of "Little People" in backwoods Wales, has moments of real terror. Also noteworthy: "The White People" and Machen's little-known "Out of the Picture."
3. **The Willows**  
by Algernon Blackwood  
Otherworldly encroachments on a desolate island in the Danube. Lovecraft regarded this as the greatest horror story ever written; certainly it's the greatest horror story about camping out.
4. **The Dunwich Horror**  
by H.P. Lovecraft  
Quintessential HPL, mixing cosmic horror and a brooding New England locale. Another classic: "The Call of Cthulhu," a documentary-style horror tale that takes the whole world as its province.
5. **Bird of Prey**  
by John Collier  
Collier is renowned for his sophisticated wit, but in this account of a malevolent thing that hatches from an enormous egg, he's also bloodcurdling—with the real shocker unveiled in the final line.
6. **Who Goes There?**  
by "Don A. Stuart" (John W. Campbell)  
Antarctic horror, the genesis of *The Thing*. You may  
(continued on page 86)



# The Peddler's Bowl

THE BOWL HELD MAGIC,  
THAT MUCH WAS CLEAR.  
BUT WAS IT A BLESSING  
. . . OR A CURSE?

by Gordon Linzner

Sugane stepped into his hut and kicked off his ashinaka. The straw sandals protected only the soles of his callused feet. If he'd known it was going to shower on and off all day, he'd have worn the wooden ones. The beaten-earth floor felt less muddy than the path, but no less damp. The scrawny peasant was unsurprised. Heavier rainfalls often flooded the hut despite its position near the crest of a hill. Once more Sugane promised himself to someday find the resources to install a raised wooden floor, such as most of the villagers had. That day had never seemed further away, however, than it did this year.

Although his hempen trousers were already sodden, Sugane did not wish further ground-damp to seep through to his skin. So when he removed his jacket, which had kept his smock fairly dry, he opened a woven bamboo chest and took out a badly worn en-za, a round straw cushion. It would not last many more weeks, Sugane observed, and the only other cushion, now being used by his wife, was in no better shape. With winter's tedium coming on, perhaps he could persuade Kogo to weave a couple more. His own fingers were becoming too stiff for such work.

Kogo sat by the cooking hearth, watching the cauldron. Typically, the hearth was near the door of the hut. She could hardly have failed to notice her husband's arrival, even in the thick gloom. However, not until the man had settled on his en-za, as near the feeble warmth as he dared, did she speak.

"You're late. The sun is down. We should be abed. The porridge is overcooked; don't blame me." This in a soft monotone, as if she were talking to herself.

Sugane looked at her. Flickering shadows from the hearth flame accented deep scowl-lines about Kogo's mouth, but could not illuminate her dull black eyes. Sugane wished her tone were more accusatory; he disliked seeing her fret. Anxiety often set off her spells of paranoia. Not that he'd blamed her; the woman *had* been exiled from her native province after her warrior husband's act of betrayal cost him his head and she was stripped of everything

## The Peddler's Bowl

she owned. Over the twenty years since then she'd hung all her hopes on Sugane, though the aging peasant knew he was not the best of providers or protectors. Ever since their only son had left home, the spells had become more frequent.

Sugane cleared his phlegm-tight throat. "Matsumo slipped and wrenched his ankle. Three of us took him home."

Kogo lifted her head. "Did he offer you a reward? Not that you'd have taken it!"

Sugane sighed. "He has little more than we, wife. His home was on the way, so it was no great hardship, only that he slowed us down."

Kogo snorted. "Everyone's home is on your way."

Sugane could hardly deny that. His hut was the northernmost of the village, and the road repairs Lord Itomo had ordered, now that the harvest was in, were most needed at the southern end, near the crossroad. In fact, since the narrow path that wound past Sugane's hut petered out at the top of the hill, few except the peasant and his wife even came this far.

"At least we've more privacy than most," he said.

Kogo scooped porridge into an eating bowl of warped, cracking wood, which she handed to her husband. "Matsumo's too old for that kind of work," she said.

Sugane nodded, accepting the food, painfully aware of his own thinning hair, his loosening teeth, the aches in his joints. But the work had to be done. Itomo demanded that every able man pitch in, and that was that. At least Kogo had changed the subject. Perhaps her internal demons would leave her be tonight, after all.

Sugane's eyes lowered to the bowl. In the dimness, it appeared empty, although he could feel its slight warm pressure on his rough palm. He tilted the bowl toward the hearth glow. Thick millet sludge filled it only halfway. Severe rationing for so early in winter, before even the first snow. This year's harvest had been the worst in Sugane's memory, and a skirmish at the border of Lord Itomo's domain had compounded the shortage. Samurai had to be fed.

A draft seeped through chinks in the branch and mud-daubed walls to slide across his neck. He shivered. With so little to eat, Sugane wondered if he would see the next spring. Death was too commonplace to hold much personal terror, but what would become of Kogo? Who would care for her then? Certainly not their son, who'd run away to join some samurai's entourage rather than help his parents farm and tend them through old age. Ungrateful monkey! But Kogo would hear no word against the lad.

Kogo filled her own bowl and looked at Su-

"Suppose it is an evil spirit, come to snatch you away?"

Sugane forced a laugh. "Evil spirits do not ask politely to be invited indoors."

gane suddenly, with a strange expression, as if reading his thoughts. Then her face resumed its normal dull scowl. "Careful! If you spill that, you must go hungry until the morrow! I have planned our wintering to the last grain!"

Sugane leveled the bowl and, without thinking, dipped his fingers to capture a clot of millet.

"What is the matter with you tonight?" Kogo snapped. "Use your chopsticks!" She pointed to a pair of almost-straight twigs she'd placed near him, at the edge of the clay hearth.

Sugane accepted the rebuke and reached for the sticks. They balanced poorly, making eating a chore. The peasant did without them when he ate alone. For some reason, though, Kogo was happy, or at least less miserable, when he used them. If it took longer to eat, well, there was little enough food to start with.

Sugane was raising a clump to his mouth when he heard a sharp rapping at the doorpost. With a sigh, he let the millet fall back into the bowl and placed the latter on the floor beside his cushion.

"Who could that be, so late and so far from the main road?"

Kogo's thin silhouette stiffened. In the faint light, Sugane saw her hands tremble as they set her own bowl down. He cursed the visitor's timing.

"Do not answer it, husband!" Her voice was a harsh whisper.

"Eh?"

Kogo lifted herself from her cushion, scuttled crablike to Sugane's side. "Remember Kochiki?"

Sugane grimaced at the thought of hearing that story one more time. Kochiki had been headman of the next village, and had irritated his neighbors by putting on airs of the nobility. One day a traveling samurai, observing that Kochiki's was the finest house in the area, demanded hospitality for himself and his retinue. One does not refuse a samurai. Half the year's larder vanished in one night, and Kochiki had to sell his eldest daughter to a geisha house in Edo to survive the winter. Since that time, Kochiki lived less conspicuously.

"Wife, that was six years ago ..."

"The time is ripe for another such visit. And we have no daughters to sell!"

"Nor anything else that would attract a samurai or even a masterless ronin. The eta, the out-

casts, would refuse to beg from us, were they permitted to."

"Little is still more than nothing!"

Reasoning was useless when Kogo got like this, but Sugane always tried. If it did not help her condition, neither did it worsen it, and he felt better for the attempt.

"What nonsense you speak, woman. How shall I not answer, when anyone with ears has already heard our whispers, when anyone with eyes can see the glimmer of our hearth fire through the chinks in the wall? If that were a samurai, which it isn't, we would *have* to answer. For delaying this much, he could rightly have our heads. That is how things are." The rapping came again.

"Hail! Suppose it is an evil spirit, come to snatch you away? What will become of me then?"

In the act of standing up, Sugane froze. His was a world of fear: fear of savage animals, his lord's displeasure, the frequent wars. He'd come to terms with such terrors, accepted their inevitability as he did that of death, but when it came to the supernatural his stoicism fell by the wayside. Lacking first-hand experience, Sugane took to heart all the tales he'd heard of the demonic oni, the dreaded kappa who could suck out a man's lifeblood through the anus, the scarlet winged imps called tengu, and, of course, restless, vengeful ghosts. Those creatures seemed all the more malevolent for their often arbitrary choice in victims.

Sugane forced a laugh for his wife's sake. "Evil spirits do not politely ask to be invited indoors."

"What about the yuki-onna, the snow woman...?"

"There is no snow yet, wife! Please! I'm wearing my red loincloth. It's protection enough." Sugane pulled free of her grip, strode two paces to the door. Kogo fell into a sullen silence. The peasant licked his lips and opened the door.

The rain had ceased for good; clouds that had brought an early dusk were thin wisps, and a wan moon was rising. Its light outlined a small, stocky man whose arms stuck straight out from his sides; startling, but no demon. The man's hands rested on either end of a long, thick pole that curved over his shoulders and behind his neck. Bundles dangled from this pole.

Normally, Sugane would have found a peddler's arrival a welcome diversion in his tedious life. Proper study of his goods by frugal wives provided hours of amusement, and a good peddler always had interesting new stories which could be passed around the village for months afterwards. But peddlers should come by day, not after sunset when most peasants were asleep and it was too dark to examine wares. And Sugane was doubly embarrassed by the

newcomer. He explained bluntly:

"You've had a long climb for nothing, peddler. We cannot buy from you."

The man laughed, a sharp bark. His eyes sparkled among the shadows that played across his shrunken face. "I have not plied my trade for three decades without learning which trees bear plums and which are barren."

Kogo now stood beside her husband, her hands clutching his arm tight enough to make him wince. "Send him away, husband. He'll trick us out of everything. He'd sell you your own nightsoil, yes, and make you beg for the privilege."

The peddler exposed his teeth. "I have with me testaments to my high ethics, should you wish to peruse—"

"What do you want?" Sugane's reading skills were limited.

"The night is chilly."

"No less so in here. If you truly seek a warm bed, you should retrace your steps. Not half an hour's walk is the home of Katsana, a young man more capable than I of proper hospitality."

"Yes!" Kogo agreed. "Begone! Seek your board elsewhere! We can spare no food for such as you!"

The peddler's grin vanished. Sugane sucked in a sharp breath. If Lord Itomo heard of Kogo's rudeness, they might be beheaded or, worse, pronounced *eta*, outsiders, forced from their hut to seek marginal livings at the edge of the village, performing work no "human" would do, sheltered in temporary lean-tos, subject to everyone's disdain.

"Forgive my wife's harsh words, stranger. She has spells. But she speaks true enough. Our larder is thin."

The peddler's expression softened. "I understand. I do not want your food, would not consider asking for it. I require shelter. The fact is"—his voice lowered—"I fear bandits."

"And I see one!" Kogo shrieked.

"Wife, please!"

"I will compensate you for the inconvenience."

The farmer shook his head. "If you only wish a roof over your head..."

"How much?" Sugane stared at his wife's abrupt transformation from cringing martyr to shrewd bargainer.

"I thought two zeni...?"

"More than enough."

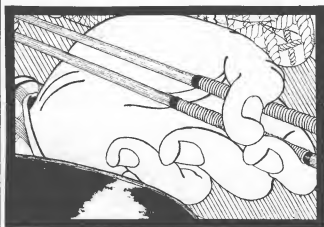
"Four!"

"Wife!"

The peddler closed his eyes in thought. Hagglng was his business, but he was too footsore, then, to take much joy in it. He could spare the extra coppers. "Agreed."

"In advance."

## The Peddler's Bowl



The stranger set down his pole with its bundles, reached into the bosom of his kimono for a drawpurse, and counted out four coins. Kogo fingered them, mesmerized by the cool metal, as the peddler carried his burden past the couple and settled beside the hearth.

Sugane recovered his voice in time to offer his own en-za, which the peddler kindly refused. Indeed, the stranger's cloak, shed and folded into a rectangle, looked far more comfortable than the shabby cushion with its protruding straws. The peddler then began untying one of his bundles. Sugane retrieved his bowl and poked at the porridge absentmindedly. Though it was impolite, he could not take his eyes from the stranger for more than a few seconds. Curious, that the man should stop at *this* hut, considerably out of the way. The peddler also softly hummed a children's song as he busied himself, and this seemed almost to invite attention. Sugane recognized the tune as a dialogue song common to Izumo province and dealing with complaints and excuses: Too cold to wash (sit by the fire); fire's too hot (move back); fleas will bite us . . .

The peddler stopped humming just before the advice to kill the fleas and glanced at his host. Misinterpreting Sugane's awkward expression, he urged the peasant to finish his meal and repeated the same to Kogo when she returned from hiding her new wealth in the sleeping alcove at the far end of the hut.

Sugane turned to look at his wife. Kogo needed no such advice; she was already eating, oblivious to all else. When Sugane looked again to the peddler, the latter had unwrapped an eating bowl made, from the way it reflected the hearth's feeble glow, of highly polished wood.

Sugane's face grew warm, not from the flames. "You toy with us, peddler. My wife has told you we can spare no food."

The peddler clucked his tongue. "How fearful you are! I have said I will not take your food, and I keep my word. I have my own provisions." So say-

ing, he produced a pair of ivory chopsticks and thrust them into the bowl. They claimed a clot of rice for him to pop into his mouth.

Sugane gaped stupidly. Cold rice balls were convenient when traveling, but he'd never seen anyone carry one in his eating bowl. And, for a moment, he thought he'd seen a wisp of steam rising from that clump of rice. That had to be a trick of the poor light, though. He turned to Kogo, wondering if she'd noticed anything odd, but she held her near-empty bowl to her mouth, sipping at it. If she had any curiosity about the recent exchange at all, it was to wonder if the peddler could be persuaded to leave some of his food with them in the morning.

Long after the couple finished their small ration, the peddler continued eating. Sugane and Kogo stared openly. Their guest chewed slowly, but not that slowly. They expected that each mouthful would be his last, yet there was always another. Kogo finally lost interest, plucked her husband's empty bowl from his unprotesting fingers, and began making ready for the night. Sugane leaned forward, narrowing his eyes. Perhaps the stranger was clumsy and rice had been spilling back into the bowl without being noticed.

Kogo stirred the ashes in the hearth with an iron tong. The light abruptly flared. Sugane had his first clear glimpse of the peddler's utensil. He stiffened.

"By the emperor! That bowl is a sakaki wood!"

The peddler swallowed and looked at his host as if aware of the scrutiny for the first time. "You have sharp eyes."

"I was briefly a woodcutter. We were taught what to avoid." Sugane stood. "I'm sorry, but you must leave at once!"

Kogo yelped. "Four coppers!"

"Not for four hundred, not for the wealth of Lord Itomo himself, can I suffer that object in my house another minute, wife! The sakaki tree is sacred. Even to gather its dead branches without permission can bring down the most horrible of curses!"

The peddler smiled up at Sugane. "Your fears are understandable, farmer, but not in this case justified. There has been no sacrilege."

"Then how do you come by such a thing?"

The peddler waved Sugane to sit again. The peasant did so warily.

"The tengu gave it to me."

Sugane covered his involuntary shiver with a scowl. Half-bird, half-human, the tengu inhabited trees in mountainous areas. Their love of mischief often led them to poke their beaks into men's affairs.

"You must have done them a heroic service, eh? Or accepted being the butt of one of their pranks with uncommon good grace?"

"This bowl is not for sale  
at any price,  
not even to your Lord Itoimo  
or to the Emperor!  
It would not accept  
another owner."

The peddler shrugged, as if he did not care whether Sugane believed him or not. "Who understands the mind of a tengu? All I can say is that one night I unknowingly camped in a forest glade used by a troop of tengu for their nightly capers. To save myself from their merciless teasing, I told my best stories. I had no idea how well they were received until, just before dawn, their king presented me with this."

Sugane rubbed his chin in thought. Yes, those forest creatures often acted whimsically, doing good turns almost by accident at times, as in the tale of the woodcutter whose disfiguring wen was removed because he'd danced so well. Nonetheless, Sugane did not wish to take chances. Wronged spirits did not care whether such wrongs were intentional or not.

"It could be so; or you could have stolen this from them."

"How suspicious you are! When have you ever heard of tengu magic working properly for a thief?"

The proof Sugane needed! "What magic?"

The peddler chuckled, eyes darting from host to hostess. "Need you ask, the way you've been studying me? Very well! The bowl never empties! I will never go hungry, and that is why I do not accept food from those who cannot spare it."

"A trick! A trick!" howled Kogo. Her doubts, assuaged by the feel of money, returned with interest. "Beware his silver tongue. I'll wager he's secretly been conveying the same bit of rice to his lips all evening!"

The peddler seemed genuinely amazed. "To what purpose?"

"Why, to steal everything we have, in exchange for a worthless bowl!"

"It would be worse than useless to you. This bowl is not for sale at any price, not even to your Lord Itoimo or to the Emperor!"

"So you say."

"It would not accept another owner. However, I can and will share its bounty. That should persuade you of my honesty." He extended the bowl to her.

Kogo stared at its polished surface, at the thin steam that rose from its contents. Her chopsticks

poised hesitantly. She licked her lips.

"Careful, wife! Tengu magic is dangerous."

The peddler smiled reassuringly. "I have shared my bowl with many, farmer. As long as it is clearly understood that it is still mine, and merely loaned, no harm befalls. Please, take some. Both of you."

Kogo barely heard the men's words; she was listening to her stomach. She grasped the bowl and began eating quickly. Sugane watched for a moment, then joined her, taking his meal from the opposite side of the bowl. The rice was delicious, perfectly cooked, better tasting than he'd ever imagined it could be.

When they'd eaten the equivalent of two bowls each, their shrunken stomachs could hold no more. Sugane pried the marvelous bowl from his wife's fingers and passed it almost reverently to its owner. His look of gratitude was more eloquent than words. The peddler looked profoundly satisfied as he wrapped the bowl.

"Now," he said, "I am weary."

Sugane nodded. Before the couple's sleeping alcove was a tattered rush screen the peasant had salvaged three years earlier, when he'd been required to assist in the renovation of Lord Itoimo's home. The faded dragon design was almost invisible in the dark hut. Sugane moved this screen close to the eastern wall, providing their guest with a place of relative privacy. He also brought fresh straw for him to sleep on.

The peddler acknowledged this honor with a low, solemn bow. He gathered up his possessions and withdrew.

Kogo put out the fire, making sure no ember glowed. Even in the coldest days of winter, she used the hearth only for cooking. Letting it burn unattended all night for its feeble warmth was not only foolishly expensive; there was always the risk of setting the hut alight.

A cold breeze at his back, felt through the smock, wakened Sugane. He shifted on his layer of straw, reached behind with one hand. It touched only air.

Kogo did not lie beside him.

Shivering in his thin hempen clothing, Sugane rose to his haunches. Kogo's changing moods this evening had been disconcerting. What might she be up to now? Probably she'd only stepped outside to relieve herself. Kogo hated the night and usually attended to her needs before dusk, but they had eaten far more than usual. His own abdomen was distended.

Straw rustled as he got to his feet. Then a hand came from the near-pitch of the hut to clasp his shoulder.

## The Peddler's Bowl

"Heh?"

The hand climbed to his mouth, silencing him. He knew those thin, rough fingers.

"Quiet," Kogo whispered. "Come outside."

Not willing to argue with a guest in the house, Sugane followed her. He moved stealthily past the screen, so as not to disturb the peddler. Kogo had done likewise, more furtively.

Outdoors felt warmer than the inside of the hut. The clouds were completely fled. The quarter moon was bright enough for Sugane to see the object Kogo held.

"Wife, are you mad?"

"Softly, husband. You will wake him."

"Do you think he will not know? If not on waking, then certainly the moment he hungers."

"We hunger, too. If you fear the peddler so much, there is a stone by the hearth perfect for cracking skulls."

Sugane's jaw fell. "Murder a guest in our home!" His voice was so low it could barely be heard; he feared his wife's fits had now permanently unbalanced her.

"How strange you look! You should know I am not in earnest. Besides, this bowl would not serve us if we killed its owner. I have only borrowed it for the night. I thought to surprise you, but I need your help. I cannot hold the tawara open and fill it at the same time."

Sugane stared glumly at the woven straw sack at his feet. It lay in a heap, mouth partly open, a handful of rice glistening there.

"It is still theft."

"How so? The supply is infinite. He loses nothing." Exasperated at her husband's indecision, Kogo thrust chopsticks and bowl into his hands and raised the sack herself, holding it wide.

Sugane swallowed hard, dipped the sticks into the sakaki bowl. He pulled out a few grains and let them fall into the tawara. He repeated this action several times and then stopped.

"Now what is wrong?"

He shook his head. "It will take a week to fill the sack, at this rate."

"You work hard, husband, but you have no imagination!" Kogo retrieved the bowl and sticks and shoved the sack into Sugane's hands. While he stared, she turned the bowl upside down and shook it. Nothing.

Kogo then probed its interior with the chopsticks, dislodging a thin, short-lived cascade. In the moonlight, it looked like molten silver. She scraped again, and the white rain resumed. It continued, heavy and light, according to the strength of her proddings.

The moon slid quietly between the tree branches.

"Three-quarters full," Sugane observed at last. The sack could stand open on its own, under the weight of its contents. "Enough to last us through the next harvest easily, with what we already have."

Kogo paid no heed. While Sugane's teeth chattered and wisps of fog streamed from his nose, the warm swollen grains rose higher, spilt over, bounced off Kogo's bare toes.

"Another sack! Quickly! The hour of the tiger passes!"

"We could never eat so much!"

"Fool! What we do not eat, we can sell!"

"Oh? And when Itomo's men come to ask why we have not paid the nengu, the rice tax, on this bounty?"

"Don't fret over details now! Hurry!"

Sugane grimaced and stepped inside the hut to fetch another tawara. He was gone but a minute, yet Kogo seethed with impatience. When he returned, she started scraping rice into the sack before Sugane could fully open it.

Then there was only the scrape, scrape, scrape of the sticks against the side of the bowl, mingled with Kogo's heavy breathing and the rattle of Sugane's teeth. Until:

"Nearly full. Get another sack now, so I don't have to wait again."

"Wife, the east grows pink."

"All the more reason for haste."

Muttering darkly, Sugane left his wife once more. He was not sure they had a third sack, at least not in a condition to hold much.

Kogo dug faster and faster, determined to be ready when her husband returned. The moon faded. Starlight vanished. The woman had reached the point at which she could scrape no faster, the rice spill at no greater rate.

She was dissatisfied.

Hissing with frustration, Kogo threw down her clumsy chopsticks and plunged her right hand into the bowl. She would pull the stuff out by the fistful, if that's what it took. Her hand burrowed down to the wrist. Her fingers went numb with sudden cold. She yanked at her first handful.

The bowl tore free from her left hand, to dangle on the end of her arm.

Kogo swore, then abruptly laughed at her own foolishness. She recalled the monkey who was trapped with his paw in a jar of nuts, because he was unwilling to give up the nuts even to escape. Well, Kogo admitted, perhaps she had been too greedy. But she was smarter than a monkey. She grasped the edge of the bowl to keep it from falling, and opened her fist. At least she willed her fist to open, for the hand was now so cold she could not feel it respond.

It remained stuck.



In panic, she fell to the ground, smashing the bowl in the mud to break free. The sakaki wood was strong. Too late, she realized that her right arm had sunk to the elbow, and that awful cold crept upwards.

Her scream was a quiet whimper.

Using only the soles of his feet, Sugane padded quietly behind the screen of rush with its disappearing dragon. Outside, full dawn had come, but gloom, as always, dominated the hut's interior. There was just enough light for him to see the bowl's cloth wrapping where Kogo had discarded it the night before. He folded this carefully around the utensil and knelt to slip it into an open bundle.

Then he noticed the peddler's eyes were open.

"I ... only wanted to look. Such craftsmanship ... a poor nobody like me ... I could have been a woodworker ..."

The peddler's face was bland. To Sugane, that seemed more ominous than if the stranger had raged. The peddler sat up and took the bowl from Sugane's hands with a strange gentleness. He unwrapped it, held it to a ray of sunlight that slipped between the branches of the wall. The rim was flecked with red.

The peddler focused on Sugane's pale, drawn face.

"What have you done?"

The neutral tone seemed to accent the sense of horror behind those words; the peddler already knew the answer.

Sugane prostrated himself. "Be merciful, sir! Please do not denounce us to Lord Itomo! It was my wife's idea, but she meant no harm. She's headstrong, she has fits—"

"Hushi!"

The peddler heard a soft moan beyond his screen.

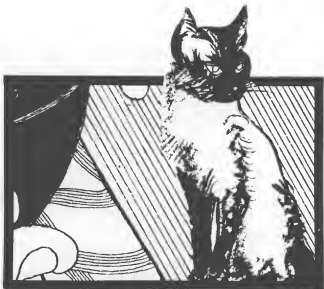
"We were so hungry—"

"Be still!" The peddler rose. His arm shot out, overturning the dragon screen. It struck the beaten-earth floor with a crack; an edge of the frame sprang loose.

Kogo cringed beside the hearth, eyes fixed on her cooking pot, just at the edge of the light pouring in the open door. The peddler stepped forward. She cowered, sobbing, pressing against the mud-daubed wall. He ignored her to look into the pot. It was half-filled with a black, noisome, gelatinous mass.

The peddler spared Kogo a single glance and turned to Sugane.

"You must think me a monster. Do you imagine I have never wished, in time of famine, to fill a storehouse for a stricken village from the gift of the tengu? It doesn't work. The bounty of the tengu must be taken as it comes; it cannot be hoarded. As it is, I do what I can. I travel from village to village,



though I could have retired years ago, and seek out the poorest hovels in which to spend my nights, so that I can share my fortune one evening here, the next there."

Kogo wailed, bending her head so her forehead touched her knees. Sugane was still prone and trembling.

"Oh, get up!" the peddler snapped. Sugane did so quickly, with grateful noises. "Never mind that. How much did you try to preserve?"

"Two ... two sacks."

"You'll have to throw them out and weave new ones. The cauldron *may* be salvaged, if you scrub hard enough."

Sugane shuddered. "We didn't know ..."

The peddler returned to his packs, began putting his things in order. "I know you didn't. I'm more angry at myself than with you. Having said so much last night, I should have told you more. I was tired, and I've told the story so often ... Still, the omission was inexcusable." He slipped the pole onto his shoulder and stepped to the door, pausing at the threshold. "I thought to bring a moment of pleasure into your lives. Instead, I have increased your hardships."

"It was all my fault!" wailed Kogo.

Sugane cleared his throat. "No, wife. Neither your fault nor mine." He looked at the peddler. "Nor yours, either, peddler. It is simply the way things happened."

The peddler pursed his lips in thought. His hand, hidden from Sugane's sight by the lintel, hung his draw purse from a loose bit of bark. "You are overgenerous, farmer, far more than many who can afford it better."

"At least I am not compelled to leave my home and family."

The peddler's eyes brightened for an instant. Then, with a stiff bow, he took his leave, pointedly avoiding any notice of the distraught Kogo, particularly her kimono and its empty right sleeve pinned to the shoulder. 17

# A Pair of Cat-Tales

TWO FACES OF YOUR FRIENDLY  
NEIGHBORHOOD FELINE:  
DEMONIC . . . AND DELIGHTFUL

## The Better Choice by S. Fowler Wright

Mutants," Professor Forsyte said with quiet finality, "are normal, for mutability is a fundamental natural law. They have been explicable since we have known that atoms may be transformed or split with inevitable consequence—and they are certainly nothing new.

"One of the earliest books that has survived from classical times narrates how a man's wife was changed into a cat; and there is independent testimony, almost equally ancient, from Northern Europe, which tells of the mutations of men and wolves."

Olive asked: "Could you do it? I should rather like being a cat."

"I should have supposed that the attraction would not be great."

"Well, I feel differently. Shouldn't you like me purring against your legs?"

The professor looked at his wife doubtfully. She had always been too volatile, too flippant to be helpful in serious work. But perhaps now . . .

As he hesitated, he saw the expression of petulant annoyance which was too frequent on an attractive face.

"Of course," she said, "you couldn't. It's only talk."

"If you would cooperate—"

"I'd jump at the chance."—And I'd be able to jump better than I do now, she thought whimsically; but she had learned that such levities were not appreciatively received.

"It would be a particularly interesting experiment," the professor continued. "But we should need to have a clear understanding about getting you back to normal. We should have to cooperate in that also."

"You think it might come unstuck there?"

"There should be no risk whatever. I only meant that the cat—that I couldn't do it without your consent."

"Well, you'd certainly get that!"

Olive had been away for nearly a week, callously leaving the professor in ignorance of what might have occurred. She had had the time of her life. She had teased dogs. She had stolen food without fear of criminal law. She had had adventures upon the tiles.

Now she leaped on to the windowsill, so that (for he was not asleep, as she had assumed he would be) he saw her, black against the moonlit sky.

Would she come in? Would she creep in beside him? Would she be content to wait till the daylight should come, or would she desire his help to release her now, so that the dawn would reveal a disorder of gold-brown hair, and a piquant face asleep on a red-nailed hand?

So he hoped, so he expected that it would be; but it might be best that she should think him asleep while he watched what she would do.

She did not come in. Only her tail moved. He saw it arch and wave, as if it were agitated by the thoughts that crept down her spine.

It was true that she had meant to return to him, and her human life. It had been an evident course which her mind had accepted without debate. But it was now that a doubt arose.

There was so little to return to: so very much to resign. He saw her turn and leap back into the night. 17



Photo © Frank Beyda from Cheri Amis by Jonell Belden Beyda with Frank Beyda © 1977 Pomeco Press Limited (E.P. Dutton, New York, NY)

# The Book

by Gahan Wilson

Doren's fingers found the black book before the rest of him. They had cruised, almost independently, hopping, groping, from book to book after the manner of the fingers of collectors the world over, touching each book tentatively, but with skill, and when they felt the odd, almost furry spine of the black book they had stopped quickly as an owl's gaze halts on a mouse. He looked down at the book his fingers had discovered for him and carefully concealed any outward signs of the electric thrill which ran through him. Casually, studiously so, he took the black book from its place and languidly began to turn its pages.

His eyes and fingers worked together now; taking in the peculiar softness of the skin pages, noting the heavy black type deeply indented into its sienna-splotched, ochre background, touching and seeing the barbaric woodcuts of astrological signs and magic circles and imps and dark angels.

Doren's heart began to beat with a thudding intensity which frightened him. He almost believed it might be audible to others. He could imagine its thumping carrying across the empty shop where the ears of old Steiner would perk and listen. But Steiner's back remained solidly turned and Doren gave a strained smile at the fantasy.

He closed the book and carefully slipped it back where he had found it. His head buzzed with schemes of confusion. A large black cat jumped soundlessly onto the stall and Doren stroked it, thankful for the interruption. He felt the cat's back arch under his hand and he attempted to consider his situation coolly.

It was the sort of situation which never happened. People who didn't collect books, or who collected them only a little, always felt that they really might come across a Shakespearean folio, or a Gutenberg Bible, or, Doren swallowed, a black book such as this. But it never happened. Old Steiner and his fellow bookdealers saw that.

He glanced down at the book again, tore his eyes from it, and selected another one at random. The cat mewed pettishly and he stroked it again to silence it.

It wouldn't take a Steiner to spot the black book, thought Doren. This was no subtlety, no delicately flawed wonder, no first edition panted after only by certain esoterics. There was nothing obscure about this treasure. Its feel, its look, even the smell of it broadcast its singularity. The most ignorant clerk would have been sophisticated enough to at least strongly suspect the black book's value.

He put down the book he'd been toying with, he couldn't even remember its title, and risked another inspection of his find. Its absurd, its altogether ridiculous price was lightly penciled on its end page: one dollar and seventy-five cents. He almost gasped when he recognized Steiner's European seven with its crossbar. That eliminated the idea of a blunder by a part-time assistant. The old man had priced it himself.

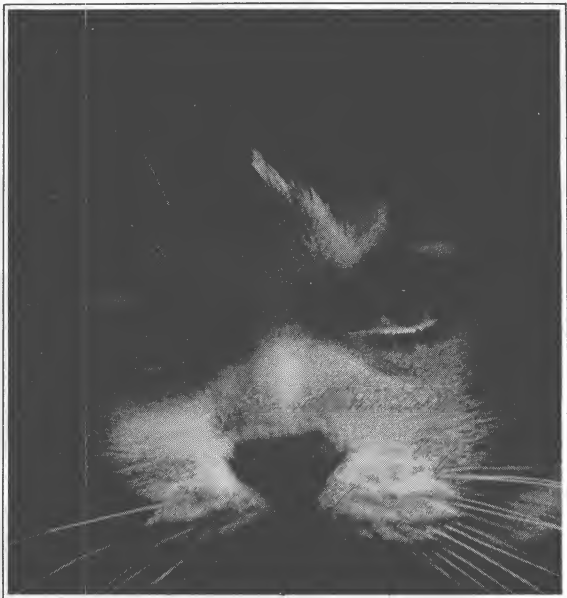
Had he been drunk? It wasn't in character. But how on earth could the old man have come to make such a gigantic error? How could he have given the black book its grotesque price and condemned it to a common stall?

Would he give challenge when Doren went over to buy the book? It seemed likely. The hideous mistake would be seen at once, a plausible explanation would be hastily presented, and the book would be out of Doren's hands forever. Forever—because Doren knew he would never be able to afford anything like its true cost. It was an item only for richly endowed libraries and millionaire collectors. The thing must be practically priceless.

Doren turned to a carefully cut magic circle. Each minute detail was sharp and clear. It was important, he reflected wryly, not to make mistakes when you drew a magic circle. He had seen plenty of them before, of course. Every *grimoire*, every warlock's spell book, contained at least one of them. The idea of the circle was central to the diabolist's art. But this one was, in some tingling way, different from any of the others. This one looked as if it might actually work.

He closed his eyes and opened them again, like a man with a bad headache, and the shop seemed to rush in at him. It was as if he had been away in some far-off place for an immeasurable time and only just returned. He looked down dazedly at the cat and it looked up at him with green expectation in its eyes.

Doren felt suddenly tired. He could not cope with the plots and plans which flashed through his mind. He saw himself gathering an armful of books and taking them up to Steiner, shuffling them before the old man's eyes like a magician with a pack of cards, burying the black book in a flurry of unimportant others. He imagined himself waiting until a rush of customers were at the dealer's desk, and then shoving the book hurriedly into view, giving him money and going before the old man could properly take in what had happened. He seriously considered just slipping the book into his pocket and leaving without paying.



He sighed. He could do any of these things, but in his present peculiar state of exhaustion he felt he wouldn't be up to the simplest of them. For the first time in his life he found himself a convinced fatalist. If it was to happen, it would happen, he decided; if it wasn't, then it wouldn't.

He walked up to Steiner's desk with the black book in his hand. Doren noticed that he looked thin and haggard, as if he had been through a bad illness. Perhaps the dealer was sick. That might explain it.

"Well, Mr. Doren? Found something you want?"

"Yes," said Doren. He put the book on the desk and pushed it toward the old man.

Steiner opened it without curiosity and noted the price. "One dollar and seventy-five cents, please," he said, and when Doren had given him the exact change, he said, "Thank you, Mr. Doren."

Doren took the black book, knew it was now his, and was torn between the impulse to shout in triumph and, oddly, to cry in sorrow. He nodded at

the old man and walked unsteadily through the shop. He paused at the door and blinked at the sunlight. It was too bright. It seemed unfriendly. He hunched his shoulders and went down the street, patting and stroking the book with his hands.

Steiner watched him leave. When Doren had passed out of sight the old man turned to look at the cat, which perched calmly on the stall where the black book had been.

"All right," said Steiner wretchedly. "It's gone. Now you go."

The cat smiled broadly at the old man. It was a horrible smile. It was bigger by half than the cat's small head. The teeth were thick, white, and pointed like a shark's. The cat leaped gracefully to the floor and, still grinning hugely, left the shop in stalk of Doren.

Then the old man sagged in his chair, alone, completely alone, with his bleak awareness that he had gained no reprieve, after all. 17



Randy Jones

## A Feline Portfolio

TZ ARTISTS LOOK AT THE MOST PERFECT SUPERNATURAL CREATURE OF THEM ALL.

On the assumption that one picture is worth, et cetera, and that every artist worth his or her salt must surely have a cat picture or two tucked away, we asked a number of TZ illustrators to ransack their "C" files and give us all a look. Here is the result—worth, we think, at *least* fourteen thousand words—but with some choice quotes thrown in for good measure.



Dorvis



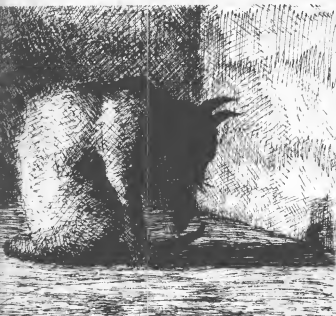
John Canizzo



Nicola Culi



Annie Allen



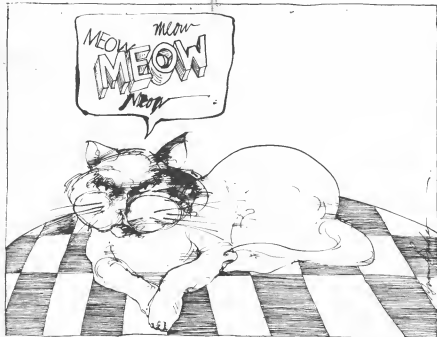
Stephen W. Andrus

*The catte is a beaste  
of uncertain heare  
and colour, for some  
catte is white,  
some rede,  
some black,  
some spewed and  
speckled in the fete  
and in the face and  
in the eares.*

*And he is . . . in youth  
swyfte, plyante and  
merry and lepeth and  
reseteth on all thyng  
that is tofore him;  
and is led by a strawe  
and playeth therwith.  
And is a right hevy beaste  
in age,  
and ful slepy,  
and lieth slily in wait  
for myce . . .*

*and when he taketh a mous  
he playeth therwith,  
and eateth him  
after the play . . .  
and he maketh  
a ruthful noyse  
and gustful when  
one proffereth to  
fyghte with another.*

—Bartholomew Glanvil,  
*De Rerum Natura* (1398)



Yvonne Buchanan



**“ . . . Gaze**

***With those bright languid segments green, and prick  
Those velvet ears—but pr’ythee do not stick  
Thy latent talons in me.”***

—Keats, *On Mrs. Reynolds’s Cat*

***“When I play with my cat,  
who knows whether I do not  
make her more sport  
than she makes me?”***

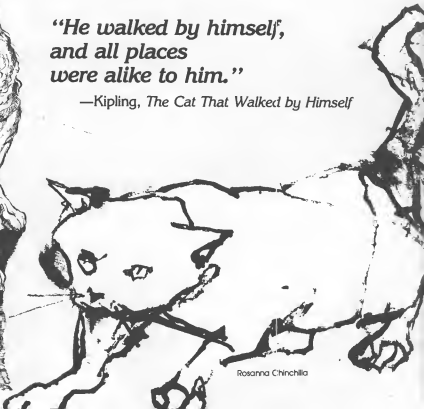
—Montaigne, *Essays*

***“He walked by himself,  
and all places  
were alike to him.”***

—Kipling, *The Cat That Walked by Himself*



Chris Pellehare



Rosanna Chinchilla



**"Always keep in mind that he  
Resents familiarity."**

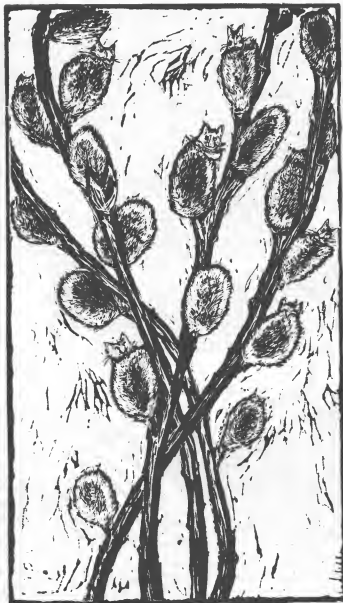
—Eliot, *The Addressing of Cats*



Peter Kuper



Ahmet Gorgun



Frances Jetter

**"Cat: A creature that  
plays with mice  
and pretends  
they're men."**

—Anon.

**"...neither masculine  
nor feminine  
but feline."**

—bodybuilding champ Lisa Lyon



Richard Basil Mock

# Mist



# al

by Jon Wynne-Tyson

## WHEN THE WIND KNOWN AS LE MISTRAL BLOWS, MEMORIES RETURN, MASKS ARE TORN AWAY, AND HORROR UNSHEATHS ITS CLAWS.

If you know the South of France (what most people mean by the South of France, that is—the Côte d'Azur), you may know Saint-Tropez. But maybe not. Users of what is loosely called the Riviera are extraordinarily insular. Even with the autoroute—perhaps because of it—the country west of the Esterel is as foreign to many who favor the region to the east as Perth is to Penzance.

But not to me. I have seen all I want of the French coast from Marseilles to Menton, and you can have Nice, Monte Carlo and the rest with a pound of tea. They have nothing on Saint-Trop.

I am prejudiced, of course. Partly, perhaps, because enjoyment of today's Côte d'Azur is an art, not a choice easily bought by casual application to the tour operators. Nowhere along that expensive littoral is it more essential to exercise that art than in the area of Saint-Tropez. Where Cannes and Monaco have something to offer at almost all times of the year, Saint-Trop demands from the visitor the approach, the reverence, of the connoisseur.

In high summer, for instance—the most popular and unsuitable period—you need to be a rabid bon vivant, a truly *person* person, to endure the sheer excess of humankind in a region offering no outlet for urban overspill. In the winter, on the other hand, none but a misanthropic masochist with an inordinate concern not to miss the first golden promise of mimosa is going to suffer the bleak desolation of empty streets so often scoured by that most unpleasant of God's varied gifts, the mistral.

"Unpleasant," for many, is putting it mildly. Some, the purists—those likely to hold that the Riviera lies only between Nice and Genoa—say that nowhere west of Cap Ferrat is really habitable, so frightful is that cold dry wind that roars down the Rhone valley to spread its fury over Provence, proving to pursuers of the dolce vita that Nature alone is truly egalitarian. Others, less hysterical, chance wintering in Cannes and Antibes. But further west, beyond the Esterel, there you have to know what you are about. There you have to have some special reason for defying the natural and man-made perils so inadequately repelled by the Massif des Maures.

One of those special reasons, of course, is the concentrated pulchritude of Saint-Trop. Not only are

its summer girls beautiful and plentiful, but they show a lack of inhibition less apparent in such self-conscious resorts as Cannes and Nice than on the cleaner beaches and the open waters of Saint-Trop. Not for nothing has that delightful little town so long been the haunt of writers, artists, and the least stuffy of media persons.

Even a few miles down the coast in Port Grimaud—that pseudo-Venetian aqua-suburb for retired civil servants and bank managers from Croydon and Saint-Cloud—nubile girls, still with ponies in Surrey meadows, bare their breasts the moment they set foot on a Gulf-bound yacht or motorboat.

Be that as it may, the last person I expected to meet there, even in June, was Ambrose. One of the connoisseur months, June is a little ahead of the worst of the mob, a time when one can sit at a café table in the Place des Licqs, enjoying the cool shade below the huge plane trees, listening early and late to the click of *boules*, watching through the hotter hours those who forsake the quayside and the expensive refreshments at Senequiers to explore the quieter streets and squares. In June, before the French rush like lemmings to the coast, the weather can be exquisite. But in no month of the year can one be sure of avoiding the mistral.

Ambrose had not seen me. His gaze was on the dry brown powdered earth of the square. His shoulders were more stooped than I remembered, his expression verging on the gloomy. Seeing that he was literally attached to the sexiest woman I had seen in years, this seemed odd.

"Hey! Ambrose!" I called.

He looked up.

"Oh, hallo, Charles," he said. His voice lacked animation, let alone surprise. Our last meeting might have been five days back, not five years.

"I didn't know this was your beat and season," I said.

He compressed his lips and wrinkled his brow in a facial shrug. He certainly looked older, but except for an unremembered scar on his neck, much the same dapper, neat little man, a head shorter than myself.

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"It's not really," he said, "but Angelina likes the warmth."

I smiled, feeling that an introduction was called for. On the few times we had met since school days, Ambrose had invariably been accompanied by beautiful women, none of whom he had married, so far as I knew. I had never known him well—he was too much of a woman's man for that—and if it had not been for the school link I might not have numbered him among remembered acquaintances. As with relations, those one has known at school are not necessarily the people one keeps up with.

"Well, have a drink," I said.

Ambrose introduced me. "This is Charles Massingham. Charles, meet Angelina." He gave her no second name.

Angelina offered me a slim, brown hand. Her wrists bore several thin gold bangles and her nails were painted the tawny brown of dried blood. She did not grip my hand, yet I felt through her fingers a strange, urgent strength, and this was apparent in the way she moved. Her figure was flawless, her body extraordinarily supple. I wondered if she was a dancer. She wore a bronze-gold jump suit that fitted her perfectly, emphasizing the sparseness, the alert animality of her body. Her long legs—like me, she was inches taller than Ambrose—were flattered by fine high-heeled gold sandals that must have cost the earth, and her black hair was drawn back from a face that was more feline than human, though of exquisite delicacy and proportion. The only imperfection, though it detracted nothing from her sensuality, was a slightly overfull lower lip, imparting a faint air of smoldering challenge. She reminded me of one of the great cats—a cheetah, perhaps. This impression was strengthened by the fine chain leash that was attached to her left wrist and held by Ambrose, for all the world as though he were walking an Afghan or saluki.

I carefully avoided a second glance at the gold leash. Ambrose had always enjoyed reactions from those more unimaginative and staid than himself. Even at school, in the days when I was far more interested in *The Boys' Own Paper* and the egg-laying habits of peewit and sparrow hawk than in the thin dark ice of human relationships, Ambrose was a living legend to the older boys. In fact, his precocity did little for his formal education: for having made it in the shrubbery with Saint Bartholomew's singularly pretty matron, he was expelled without a moment's hesitation by the matron's husband, who as it happened was the headmaster, and never got round to taking the exams that might have channeled his energies toward a university, a solid job, and a more serious lifestyle. To make matters worse, his father died about then, leaving investments and property that provided his son with an all

too adequate income for the rest of his life. Riches and randiness: a heady combination few survive.

I had reached that time of life when, meeting a beautiful woman, I could take her or leave her, so to speak. Well, leave her, then, without actually taking. You know what I mean. But I had to admit that Angelina was something special. She sat at the table almost gingerly, as though unaccustomed to a chair, so lightly in contact with it that I felt she might have sprung away through the plane trees at the slightest provocation—had it not been, of course, for that slender gold leash. Her eyes were watchful, never still; alert, restless, seeking. Yet seeking what?

"Well," I said unimaginatively, "this is quite a surprise."

"For me too," said Ambrose. "I didn't suppose you still came out here."

"I'm flattered you've considered the matter," I said.

The waiter appeared.

"What will you have?" I asked.

"Angelina likes orange juice. The real thing. I'll have the same."

Angelina seemed to accept his choice.

"What do you want in it?" I asked Ambrose.

"Nothing. Just as it comes."

I blinked. I had never known Ambrose to drink anything non-alcoholic. Even at school he had a reputation for rather good wines. "Clarets, dear boy," I remember him saying as we waited to bat in some house match, "are really the best for your digestion. Go for the Médocs and you will have little trouble." It never struck me in those days that his sophistication could be anything but innate.

"Right," I said, and ordered.

Angelina stroked Ambrose's arm with her free hand and looked into his eyes. Except for a murmured "Allo" when we shook hands, I had not heard her speak.

"I mus' go Hawaii for lily time," she said mysteriously.

"Must you?" Ambrose replied. "Very well, then; come straight back."

I had noticed the small key on the fine chain round his neck, and now he used this to unfasten the little padlock that held the leash to the lowest and most robust of the bangles on Angelina's wrist. She slid silently from her chair and disappeared into the cool depths of the cafe.

"Italian?" I asked.

"Hungarian with a dash of Spanish."

"Some mix!"

I clenched my fist, grimacing, and punched the air, holding my forearm rigid in a gesture familiar to men, but one I had not used for many years. Ambrose nodded. The old animation had definitely gone.

"I know what you're thinking. She's not all body, though."

"No?"

"No. You may not believe it, but she has a lovely nature. Very tenderhearted. Wouldn't hurt a fly. Loves animals. We were with Brigitte only yesterday."

"Bardot?"

He nodded. "She's intelligent, too. Quite a thinker. Angelina, I mean."

"Well, you never know," I said.

"She's very environmentally sensitive."

"Really? Low technology? Alternatives?"

"Population control, especially. She thinks our numbers should be drastically reduced until we have small communities living only in suitable climatic areas."

"Not the kind of thing the politicians would want to follow up," I said.

The waiter brought their orange juices.

"Are you quite sure you'd like nothing stronger?" I said. "Before Angelina returns. A little gin, perhaps?"

He shook his head. "I've made a deal."

"Who with? Alcoholics Anonymous?"

"With Angelina."

"She doesn't look the type to exert a reforming influence."

"As you said, 'you never know.'"

"Well," I agreed, "it's probably no bad idea to watch things a bit once one's in sight of one's fifties."

"That's what Angelina says. She says she wants me fit or not at all."

"You don't think," I said, "that in this climate, with a girl like that, at our sort of age . . . ?"

Ambrose gestured, a little impatiently.

"It's an attitude of mind, Charles. You've given up too soon."

"Not given up exactly," I replied. "I'm still married to Christine."

"Well, there you are. We make our beds."

I changed the subject.

"Are you ever in London?"

"Seldom. Last July, for two weeks, but we move around. Angelina won't winter in Europe. It has to be the Caribbean, the Seychelles—that kind of thing."

"An expensive girl."

"But worth it. I could tell you—"

"Don't. I may have given up, as you put it, but the heat still turns one on a little."

"I'm glad to hear it," Ambrose said. "Angelina thrives on heat. She says we were intended for subtropical temperatures. That was what I was about to tell you. She really has a most inquiring mind."

*She reminded me of one of the great cats—a cheetah, perhaps. This impression was strengthened by the fine chain leash that was attached to her left wrist.*

"But the other side . . . ?" I asked. "Surely . . . ?"

"Of course. That too. But there's another face to the coin, you know, Charles. Sex isn't everything."

"No," I said. "No, indeed. How true."

The conversation flagged. The waiter, hopeful, handed me the menu. I looked at my watch. Ambrose looked at his, then toward the dark interior of the cafe.

"Seeing to her face," he said.

"It's getting on. How about lunch here? It's adequate."

Ambrose glanced at the menu.

"I don't know there's much for us."

"Steak?" I suggested. "Veal? The fish isn't bad."

"We . . . I . . . don't eat like that any longer," he said.

"Problems?"

I'd had some myself. All part of the aging process. Mushrooms and sweet corn seemed immune to the digestive juices.

"Not really. More a . . . reorientation."

"You could have an omelette."

"Do they do a good salad?"

"I'm sure they *could*," I said. "What about the cold plate?"

Ambrose came out with it.

"We don't eat meat."

My memory was that he ate little else.

"There really have been some changes," I said.

"Angelina feels it's for our own good. Meat doesn't suit her. She's for whole food, grains, fruit, nuts—that kind of thing. She says it's as necessary we eat the right things as that we don't live in cold climates."

"Why so much concern about the cold? Do you catch chills easily?"

"No, but Angelina is—how shall I say?—better adjusted in the heat. Warmth and a bland diet is what she needs. The cold prompts her to eat things that, well, disagree with her. When the mistral blows, we stay indoors."

"It all sounds a trifle restricting," I said.

A worried look crossed his face.

"It can be a bit of a strain, actually. Angelina

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needs constant encouragement to . . . be herself."

"Nasty wind, the mistral," I agreed, not quite knowing what to say about his last remark. "Gets into the bones. The sirocco can be unpleasant, too, and I'm told people can go potty in that wind they get on the northern slopes of the Alps."

"The *föhn*," Abrose said. "They call it the 'chinook' in the Rockies. It cools at the saturated adiabatic lapse rate as it reaches the peaks, then dries as it descends on the leeward side, gaining heat."

"I've never heard it better put," I said.

He nodded. "Mind you, it's an ill wind . . . Angelina really turns on in the mistral."

"You mean . . . ?" I said.

He nodded again. "All I can handle until it gets warmer again."

"Here she comes," I said.

Angelina's jump suit was more open than before, exposing a delicious area of brown skin and just enough of each plump breast to . . . well, never mind; it was one o'clock and very warm indeed. She approached slowly, like a cautious cat not wanting to draw attention to herself. As she sat down she extended her arm submissively toward Ambrose, who attached the chain to her wrist. I wondered what the women's libbers would have thought about it all. I noticed that her nostrils were dilating and contracting gently, like an animal scenting its prey. Although she had walked only a few yards, she was panting quietly, her small pink tongue a little extended. She was wildly beautiful—and I mean "wildly"—despite that submissive act to Ambrose. Old and almost forgotten tremors threatened to disturb my peace of mind. I shifted on my chair.

"So how long are you here, Charles?" Ambrose inquired, toying with the *crudites*, which the waiter had brought with a promptness suggesting no special preparation.

"Another week. July and August are unbearable. Besides, I hate to miss the English summer in our cottage. The scabious will be flowering on the Downs soon—the most beautiful color in the world. With the corn ripening, the real woods to walk in . . ."

"You were always a one for nature," Ambrose said. "At your own level."

"Well, here it's all over. Nature is resting. don't you miss England in spring and summer? The larks? The crowslips?"

He nodded. "I suppose so. One certainly knows where one is with crowslips."

"I can't think what one would do out here," I said, "once everything dries up and the trippers descend like locusts. The sailing fraternity tests the *savoir vivre* of the most gregarious."

"I read a lot," Ambrose said.

"That's another change in you, then," I said.

"You were always too busy doing . . . other things."

"One matures," Ambrose said.

"What do you read? Bond stories? Agatha Christie?"

"Not often. More, reincarnation, Eastern religious thought."

"Good God!" I said.

A sudden swirl of air swept through the Place des Lices, a welcome disturbance of the almost solid heat, yet a warning of less pleasant things to come. I looked up from my plate at Angelina, for I thought I had heard a sharp in-drawing of breath. She was gazing up at the rustling leaves of the plane trees, her fork poised above her plate, her nostrils contracting and dilating again, but more forcefully than before. Her food looked so dull—just raw vegetables and a small portion of cream cheese.

"Do you never eat meat?" I asked her.

She shook her head slowly.

"She hasn't for a very long time," Ambrose said. "She probably couldn't even keep it down."

"Is that right?" I asked Angelina. "It would make you sick?"

She shrugged and grimaced, a half-smile making her face even more enchanting.

"Here," I said, "see if Ambrose is right."

I sliced a corner off my steak and offered it to her on the knife's point. It was rarer than I really enjoy. She allowed me to place it between her parted lips, and I noticed how sharp and slightly retracted her white teeth were as they closed on the meat. I felt she was being polite rather than of a mind to undergo the test, but she chewed obediently, reflectively, finishing it sooner than I expected. I cut another piece.

"More?" I said.

She took it willingly enough, then another. At the fifth piece Ambrose looked alarmed.

"Steady. That's enough. You know it's not good for you, Angelina."

Her eyes turned from mine to his, her smile disappearing. She chattered at him, fast, in what I took was Hungarian, her eyes burning, her lips hardly moving.

"It's still appallingly hot," I said. "Why don't you come back to my villa for coffees? It's cooler up in Gassin. I'm due for drinks on a gin palace in the port, so I can run you back later."

"I'd like that," Ambrose said.

His instant acceptance surprised me. As I say, we had never been close, yet I felt he was quite glad we had met up again. Angelina seemed less keen. She stroked his arm and looked into his eyes, speaking with her own rather than in words, though from her throat came a strange pleading noise that was almost a purr. But all he said was: "Just for a little while."

In the car he started to talk about reincarnation, asking me my views on transmigration and karma. I said I had not thought much about them, which was true. I noticed the scar on his neck reddened as he warmed to his subject.

I had taken the villa from friends who escape the mixed blessings of the Côte d'Azur from June until September. It was beautifully situated to the west of the village, with a fine view of the main range of the Massif. The terrace was a mass of oleanders and geraniums, with nothing beyond but the far hills across the falling wasteland of ilex, cork-oak, pine, and scrub. The breeze was more positive and cooler than in town, but as yet not too strong to be uncomfortable. I sat Ambrose and Angelina in the cushioned chairs and went inside to make coffee.

When I reappeared with the tray, all was clearly not well. They were quarrelling in low tones and Angelina was pulling against her leash, her eyes flashing, her extraordinary nostrils registering more than her words, which were unintelligible.

"Charles, I'm sorry, but I think we'll have to leave," Ambrose said. "Angelina's rather unhappy about this wind."

"I hoped you'd enjoy the coolness," I said.

"That's the problem. Below a certain temperature she's never quite herself, and the mistral demands certain measures . . . I think we really must get back. Our villa's very warm and sheltered."

"Of course," I said. "I'm sorry you have this difficulty."

"And we're sorry about the coffees."

"I tell you what," I said. "Take my car. I've friends in Gassin who are going into Saint-Trop this afternoon, and I've some shopping to do before the party. They can pick me up. If you leave the car in the Place des Lices, I can collect it later. I'll show you where to leave the keys."

Ambrose didn't let Angelina off her leash, even in the driving seat. Because of my car's right-hand drive, he had to switch wrists so that she could sit beside him. He made sure the passenger door was locked, then told her to get in across the driver's seat. She was very restless, almost fearful, and made sounds from her throat that were even less like speech than those she made before. I could see that Ambrose was tense and worried. It was quite a relief when they drove off down the winding minor road toward the N98.

Tony and Janet Turner seemed glad to give me a lift. They had their own problems, mostly of trying to keep together an unsatisfactory marriage by a frequent change of geography. They were rich enough to keep four small properties in different parts of the world, and they spent about three months in each. Others' company broke up

*Angelina was pulling  
against her leash,  
her eyes flashing,  
her extraordinary nostrils  
registering more  
than her words,  
which were unintelligible.*

their bickering. As we drove toward Saint-Tropez, the car rocking in the wind that now howled between the hills, I told them something about Ambrose and Angelina.

"I think we've met them," Janet said. "Yes, I'm sure we have. In Grimaud, at the Brothertons'. He's short, very smooth."

"Bit of a lady-killer," Tony said. "I remember. The girl was absolutely terrific."

Janet sniffed. She did a lot of sniffing. "That depends on your taste in such matters."

I was sideways on and slightly to the rear of Tony's grin.

"I think she could be quite a handful," I said.

"Mmmmm," Tony agreed lasciviously, gripping the steering wheel hard enough to drive the blood from his fingers.

"There's something almost . . . untamed about her," I said.

Janet sniffed again. "Pretty near to the jungle, if you ask me."

I leaned forward from the rear seat, peering through the windscreen.

"My God!" I said. "That's my car."

It had been, anyway. What I now owned looked destined for the scrap yard. It was piled up against the concrete wall of a storm pipe that ran under the road, on a nasty little bend.

Janet paled. "Maybe they're still in it. Maybe no one's been along."

"Then for Christ's sake, woman," Tony said, "we must do something about it."

The car was empty, the steering wheel bent, the windscreen shattered, the bonnet concertina'd. Some drops of blood on the dashboard and the driver's seat were still tacky.

"If police or ambulance had been, they'd have left warning notices," I said. "Or someone on guard until the recovery truck arrived."

Janet frowned. "Then where are they?"

"God knows," I said. "They only left forty minutes ago. Look, I'm sorry, I think you'd better go on without me. I feel I should make a search. They may have been injured and wandered off in a daze."

"We'll help," Tony said. "Of course."

"Then perhaps Janet could stay in the car in case anyone comes by," I said.

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The road was steep and the land sloped away from it, a maze of wild scrub and underbrush with occasional pines and outcrops of rock.

"It's no spot to be lying out with injuries," Tony said. "Least of all in this bloody wind."

"If you'll take the area to the south," I said, "I'll work north from the cars. Perhaps if we cover the ground in parallel strips..."

After twenty minutes I found a piece of Ambrose's shirt. A little further on I found Ambrose. I recognized him by his shoes; much the same price bracket as Angelina's. Where his nose and eyes had been was a fly-inviting quagmire of blood and torn skin. A missing ear had left an untidy hole that oozed gently into the mica-speckled shale of the rocky hollow in which he lay. His light clothing seemed to have been torn from his body, and I saw that all the smaller (I don't say minor) extremities were missing. As for his throat, it was simply not there; only a hideous gape of raw flesh with a protuberance of gristle I took to be his Adam's apple. I am not a squeamish man, but the undigested remains of my Place des Lices luncheon ended up in the scrub-oak near Ambrose's mangled left hand. Of Angelina and the leash there was nothing to be seen.

Nor was she ever found. I have often pondered on the incident, wondering what it was that Ambrose might have told me had we had longer together, recalling his untypical interest in Eastern beliefs, his apparent knowledge of the strange winds that can wreak such changes in human temperament, Angelina's animal restlessness, those glimpses of something not susceptible to normal explanation.

But then mine is not a psychic or complicated nature. I prefer rational explanations to overimaginative speculation. Nevertheless, when the wind gets up and I am alone—and that is most of the time now that Christine has died and I come out to Gassin more often—I go out onto the terrace and look across to the distant hills of the Maures. And something in me tells me to walk off into the scrub in search of Angelina, who I know cannot possibly still be there. And something else in me, which invariably wins, tells me to come indoors, to close the windows and the shutters, and to lose myself in books until the mistral has blown itself out.

I've become quite absorbed in Eastern ideas, incidentally. Reincarnation, karma, that kind of thing. From a purely intellectual standpoint, of course. **17**

## THE FANTASY FIVE-FOOT BOOKSHELF

(continued from page 63)

wonder, after reading it, if your best friend is actually a tentacled alien bent on world domination.

### 7. They Bite

by Anthony Boucher  
Boucher invents a totally new—and terrifyingly convincing—breed of monster, the desert-dwelling Carkers.

### 8. Stay Off the Moon!

by Raymond F. Jones  
Published in the December '62 *Amazing* (and now thankfully out of date), the story suggests that something rather nasty lurks beneath the lunar surface. If the Apollo astronauts had read this one, they might have stayed home.

### 9. Ottmar Balleau X 2

by George Bamber  
First printed in *Rogue* and then in Judith Merrill's seventh annual *Year's Best S-F* (1963), the tale introduces us to a letter-writing psychopath who seems to have

taken his cue from L.P. Hartley's "W.S."

### 10. First Anniversary

by Richard Matheson  
Just the thing for anyone who's ever suspected that his wife isn't entirely human. Domestic paranoia in full flower. Another fine example: Matheson's "Prey," which became a film to avoid watching alone.

### 11. The Autopsy

by Michael Shea  
Published in the December '80 *F & SF*, this tale of alien possession in an isolated West Virginia mining community features a monster even more demonic than The Thing.

### 12. The Trick

by Ramsey Campbell  
Hopeless, inescapable horror from a child's point of view, by the genre's grimmest practitioner. Appears in Karl Wagner's *Year's Best Horror* #10. Other Campbell contenders: "Cold Print," "The

Interloper," and "The End of a Summer's Day."

### 13. To Build a Fire

by Jack London  
Natural rather than supernatural horror: the harrowing account of a walk in the woods that becomes a race with death. Reminiscent, in its growing sense of dread, of Captain Scott's doomed journey from the Pole.

Honorable Mention to two literally monstrous tales from Donald A. Wollheim's 1955 anthology *Terror in the Modern Vein*. Fritzchen by Charles Beaumont and Mimic by Wollheim himself: to Fritz Leiber's meditation on Evil, *A Bit of the Dark World*, written to match its wonderful cover illustration in the February '62 *Fantastic*; and to two short horror novels that, where so many fail, manage to sustain a sense of the uncanny—Ringstones by "Sarban" (John W. Wall) and *The House on the Borderland* by William Hope Hodgson. **17**





## TV's Twilight Zone: Part Twenty-Five

CONTINUING MARC SCOTT ZICREE'S  
SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE TO THE ENTIRE  
TWILIGHT ZONE TELEVISION SERIES,  
COMPLETE WITH ROD SERLING'S OPENING  
AND CLOSING NARRATIONS

*"You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension—a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed over into the Twilight Zone."*

### 147. SOUNDS AND SILENCES

Written by Rod Serling  
Producer: William Froug  
Director: Richard Donner  
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens  
Music: Stock

**Cast**  
Roswell G. Flemington: John McGiver  
Mrs. Flemington: Penny Singleton  
Psychiatrist: Michael Fox  
Doctor: Francis Defales  
Secretary: Renee Aubrey  
Conklin: William Benedict

*"This is Roswell G. Flemington, two hundred and seventeen pounds of gristle, lung tissue and sound decibels. He is, as you have perceived, a noisy man, one of a breed who substitutes volume for substance, sound for significance, and shouting to cover up the readily apparent phenomena that he is nothing more than an overweight and aging perennial sea-scout whose noisemaking is in inverse ratio to his competence and his character. But soon our would-be admiral of the fleet will embark on another voyage. This one is an uncharted and twisting stream that heads for a distant port called ... the Twilight Zone."*

Flemington, the owner of a model ship company, is enamored of nautical jargon and very loud noise. At home, he relaxes by playing phonograph records of naval battles. When his wife of twenty years walks out on him (for a little peace and quiet), Flemington feels only joy—now he can enjoy the din without having to put up with complaints! But that night, he undergoes a bizarre transformation: trivial sounds—water dripping, the ticking of a clock—become deafening to him. The next day, his employees are astounded to hear him demand *quiet* in the office! This doesn't work, though; the thundering of squeaking shoes and typewriter bells drive him to a doctor, then to a psychiatrist—who convinces him the problem is all in his head. Returning home, Flemington encounters his wife, there momentarily to retrieve her jewelry. Using his new-found willpower, he shuts out the sound of her voice until it becomes a tiny squeak—then finds to his horror that *everything* sounds this way to him.

*"When last heard from, Mr. Roswell G. Flemington was in a sanitarium*



*pleading with the medical staff to make some noise. They, of course, believe the case to be a rather tragic aberration—a man's mind becoming unhinged. And for this they'll give him pills, therapy and rest. Little do they realize that all Mr. Flemington is suffering from is a case of poetic justice. Tonight's tale of sounds and silences from ... the Twilight Zone."*

#### 148. CAESAR AND ME

Written by Adele T. Strassfield  
Producer: William Froug  
Director: Robert Butler  
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens  
Music: Richard Shores  
Cast

Jonathan West: Jackie Cooper  
Susan: Susanne Cupito  
Mrs. Cudahy: Sarah Selby  
Mr. Smiles: Olan Soule  
Pawnbroker: Stafford Repp  
Watchman: Sidney Marion  
Detective: Don Gazzaniga  
Mr. Miller: Ken Konopka

*"Jonathan West, ventriloquist, a master of voice manipulation. A man late of Ireland, with a talent for putting words into other people's*

*mouths. In this case, the other person is a dummy, aptly named Caesar, a small splinter with large ideas, a wooden tyrant with a mind and a voice of his own, who is about to talk Jonathan West into the Twilight Zone."*

Unable to get bookings because his act just isn't funny, West has no money to pay for food or rent. After bombing out at an employment agency, West follows Little Caesar's directions and commits several petty burglaries. During a theater robbery, West is spotted by a night watchman. His landlady's niece, Susan, a vicious brat, overhears him discussing the bungled job with Caesar and calls the police. West is hauled off to jail, but



Little Caesar—being viewed as merely inanimate wood—gets away scot-free. Caesar tells Susan he likes her style and suggests they team up. They'll go to New York—but first they'll have to get rid of her aunt.

*"Little girl and a wooden doll, a lethal dummy in the shape of a man. But everybody knows dummies can't talk—unless, of course, they learn their vocabulary in the Twilight Zone."*

#### 149. THE JEOPARDY ROOM

Written by Rod Serling  
Producer: William Froug  
Director: Richard Donner  
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens  
Music: Stock  
Cast  
Major Ivan Kuchenko: Martin Landau  
Commissar Vassiloff: John vanDreelen  
Boris: Robert Kelljan

*"The cast of characters: a cat and a mouse. This is the latter, the intended victim who may or may not know that he is to die, be it by butchery or ballet. His name is Major Ivan Kuchenko. He has, if events go according to certain plans, perhaps three or four more hours of living. But an ignorance shared by both himself and his executioner is of the fact that both of them have taken a first step into the Twilight Zone."*

Major Kuchenko, a defector from the Eastern bloc, waits in a hotel room in a neutral country for passage to the West. Commissar Vassiloff is assigned to kill him, but he intends to do it with an artistry approaching that of a ballet. He visits Kuchenko and knocks him out with a glass of drugged wine. When Kuchenko regains consciousness, a tape recording informs him that Vassiloff has planted a bomb in the room. If Kuchenko finds it and disarms it within three hours, he is free to go. If he triggers the bomb, it will explode—and if he stops searching,



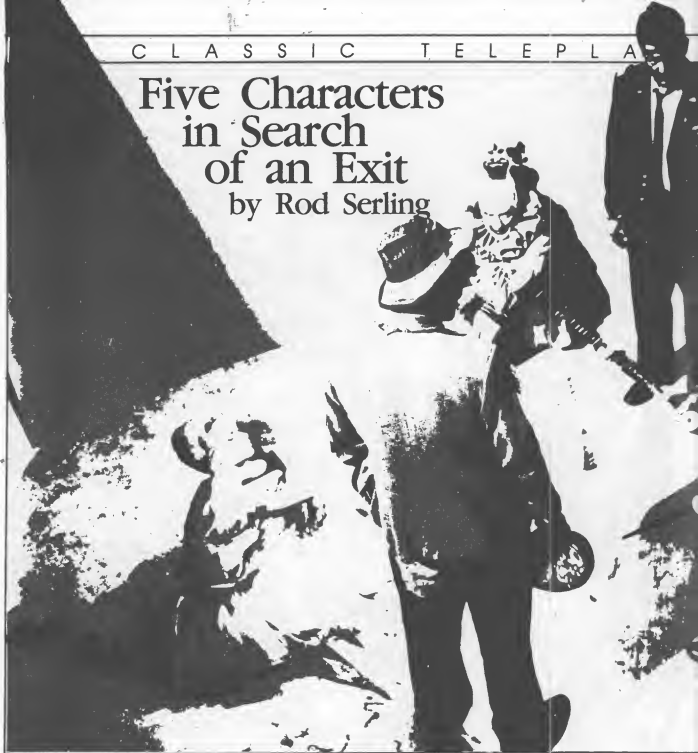
turns out the light or tries to bolt from the room, Vassiloff's assistant. Boris will shoot him from a room across an alley. Frantically, Kuchenko searches for the bomb—without result. In reality, the bomb is in the telephone, and it will explode if Kuchenko picks up the receiver after it rings. Vassiloff dials Kuchenko's number. Kuchenko reaches for it, stops, then runs out the door. Vassiloff and Boris stand in Kuchenko's room, speculating on how he guessed the bomb's location. Suddenly, the phone rings. Without

thinking, Boris picks it up—and detonates the bomb. On the other end is Major Kuchenko, calling from the airport and certain that, although no one spoke, he reached his party.

*"Major Ivan Kuchenko, on his way west, on his way to freedom, a freedom bought and paid for by a most stunning ingenuity. And exit one Commissar Vassiloff, who forgot that there are two sides to an argument—and two parties on the line. This has been the Twilight Zone."* [E]

# Five Characters in Search of an Exit

by Rod Serling



THE ORIGINAL  
TELEVISION SCRIPT  
FIRST AIRED ON CBS-TV  
DECEMBER 22, 1961

## CAST

The Major.....William Windom  
The Clown.....Murray Matheson  
The Ballerina.....Susan Harrison  
The Tramp.....Kelton Garwood  
The Bagpipe Player.....Clark Allen  
Little Girl.....Mona Houghton  
Woman.....Carol Hill

## ACT ONE

FADE IN.

### 1. STANDARD ROAD OPENING

With vehicle smashing into  
letters, propulsion into starry night  
then PAN DOWN TO OPENING  
SHOT OF PLAY.

### 2. EXTREMELY LONG ANGLE SHOT - LOOKING DOWN A VAST CYLINDRICAL OBJECT

To a darkness below—a  
fathomless pit in which we see

the stirrings of movement below,  
without any definitive idea of  
what or who is at the bottom.  
The CAMERA STARTS A SLOW  
JOURNEY DOWN the slick-walled  
receptacle until we

DISSOLVE TO.

### 3. THE BOTTOM INT. DARK ROOM A PAN ACROSS

An empty space until we pick  
up the Major who sits up with his  
back against the wall, eyes  
closed, a once-elegant uniform



#### 5. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE MAJOR

As he rises, touches the wall, then looks down at the floor, then back up above him. He steps back, cupping his hands to his mouth and shouts.

MAJOR

Hey! Hey—anyone hear me? (His voice echoes and re-echoes around the room and up through the shaft. He calls again.)

Hey? Anybody up there? Anybody hear me?

Again he listens to the mocking echoes that are left in the residue of his shout.

#### 6. ANOTHER CLOSE ANGLE OF HIM

As he leans against the wall, unbuttons his tunic, moves his head left and right as if trying to massage away the stiffness and fatigue. In this process he suddenly feels his face, is conscious of the beard stubble, and then beyond that we see an awareness of the fact as he touches the various features—lips, nose, eyes, head—that he is feeling his face as if it were a foreign object previously unknown to him. His hands drop to his sides as he slowly peers around the room. Then he steps back surveying the wall at different points.

#### 7. DIFFERENT ANGLE OF HIM

As in a burst of energy, he starts to move hurriedly around the room feeling of the wall in different places, obviously searching for an exit.

#### 8. MOVING SHOT WITH HIM

As he walks around

ABRUPT CUT TO.

#### 9. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT THE GRIMACING, GROTESQUE FACE OF A PAINTED CLOWN

As in the process of moving around, the Major has suddenly run face to face into the other figure.

CUT TO.

#### 10. TWO SHOT

As the Major recoils, momentarily frightened and taken aback. He stares at the apparition wide-eyed.

CLOWN

The fleet's in! (then screwing up his painted mouth in a semblance of a smile)

It isn't the fleet, is it? It's the army. The army's in. Hooray for the army. Get the troops out of the hot sun. Ta ra ra boom de ay!

(he snaps to at an exaggerated position of attention and salutes with a stiff, quivering hand and arm)

Your orders, Colonel? General? Whatever you are.

MAJOR

I'm a major.

CLOWN

Don't fret. You can always get advancement, even in a peacetime army. Today a major—tomorrow a brigadier.

MAJOR

(half-smiles)

I wouldn't mind having you on the General Staff. From major to brigadier. That's not bad. There's light colonel and colonel in between. You're generous, old sport. You're certainly gen—

He stops abruptly, looks suddenly perplexed, touches his face again.

CLOWN

Problem?

MAJOR

Problem? No ... no ... no problem. It's just that—

CLOWN

Just that what?

MAJOR

(feeling his face and then his uniform as he looks down at it)

A couple very small items seem to have eluded me for the moment. Like ... like who I am.

CLOWN

You're a major, aren't you?

now soiled, tattered, and torn. CAMERA MOVES in for a TIGHTER SHOT OF HIM as his eyes flicker open, and for a moment he's motionless, obviously questioning where he is, like a man waking up in a strange room. He looks slowly left and then right, then up above him.

#### 4. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP TOWARD THE TOP MAJOR'S POV

All that can be perceived is a rootless turret from which a gray light is ever-present.

# Five Characters in Search of an Exit

That's what you told me. You said you were a major. (then winking)  
Or are you impersonating an officer? That's a very serious charge—impersonating an officer.

MAJOR  
(totally bewildered)  
No, I am a major. I know I'm a major.  
(he touches the insignia on the collar of his tunic)  
I know I'm a major.  
(then a pause as he looks up toward the far distant skyline)  
I must have been wounded or something.  
(he shakes his head)  
Because I can't remember my name. I have no idea who I am. I don't remember my outfit ... or the action—

CLOWN  
The action? What action?

MAJOR  
The action. The engagement. Wherever it was I got hit.

CLOWN  
Who says you got hit?

MAJOR  
I must have been wounded somewhere. Something must have happened to me.  
(then he takes a long, close look at the clown)  
Wait a minute.  
(then louder)  
Wait a minute.

(he raises his hand and points to the clown)

Who are you? What are you doing here?

(then looking around)  
Is there a circus around here someplace?

CLOWN  
A circus?  
(he cackles without any humor or mirth)

Yeah. There must be a circus. Because I'm a clown. And clowns go with circuses. That figures, doesn't it?

(then the smile fades and through the grotesque painted smile we see the grimness of the face)

Or it should figure, shouldn't it?

A clown—a circus.  
(then pointing to the major)  
An officer—a war. That's logic. Isn't it?

(he shakes his head very slowly and then very deliberately sits on the floor, resting against the wall)

But it doesn't figure at all. Not at all.

MAJOR  
(kneeling close to him)  
Why not?

CLOWN  
Because there isn't any circus and there isn't any war. You're just like the rest of us. You wake up and here you are. No reason. No explanation. You just wake up and here you are.

MAJOR  
The rest of us?

The clown nods and motions with his head across the room.

11. CLOSE SHOT THE MAJOR  
As he reacts.

12. WHIP PAN OVER TO THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE ROOM

As a dim light suddenly goes on and illuminates a Scotch bagpiper, a beautiful ballet dancer, and a tramp. They stare across at the Major with emotionless, lusterless eyes surveying him without interest.

13. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE ROOM

As the Major rises and walks across to them, looking from face to face.

MAJOR  
What's going on here? Where are we?

(then with the first indication of a rapidly diminishing control)

What are we? Who are we?  
(then staring up toward the gray light, he shouts)

WHO ARE WE?

14. PAN SHOT ACROSS THE FACES OF THE OTHER PEOPLE

As the echo of the Major's shout bounds and rebounds against the walls.

## 15. DIFFERENT ANGLE

DANCER  
(very softly)

None of us know, Major. We don't know who we are. We don't know where we are. Each of us ... each of us just woke up one moment and here we were in the darkness.

## 16. MED. GROUP SHOT

MAJOR  
(slowly shaking his head as if rejecting)

That's ... that's incredible. How could that happen?

## DANCER

That's the same question we asked ourselves. How could it happen? A question with no answer, Major. A question with no answer. We're nameless things with no memory. No understanding of what is now. No knowledge of what will come.

## MAJOR

How long ... how long have you been here?

## BAGPIPER

That's part of the mystery, too. We just don't know.

## TRAMP

Have you any idea?

## MAJOR

(slowly shakes his head)  
No. No idea at all.

## 17. CLOSE SHOT THE MAJOR

As he turns very slowly and stares up toward the top.

## MAJOR

How long will we be here?

## CLOWN

That's a very good question. That's the best question of all. But none of us knows the answer.

The CAMERA STARTS TO MOVE UP and away from them until we're shooting down the incredibly long cylinder. During this time we hear Serling's Voice.

## SERLING'S VOICE

Clown, hobo, ballet dancer, bagpiper and an army major.

We suddenly come upon Serling who is staring down at them as

if from the top part of the tube.

#### SERLING

A collection of question marks. Five improbable entities stuck together in a pit of darkness. No logic. No reason. No explanation. Just a prolonged nightmare in which fear, loneliness and the unexplainable walk hand in hand through the shadows. In a moment we'll start collecting clues as to the why's, the what's and the where's. We will not end the nightmare ... we'll only explain it. Because this is ... The Twilight Zone.

FADE TO BLACK

#### OPENING BILLBOARD FIRST COMMERCIAL

FADE ON:

#### 18. INT. THE ROOM

It remains semi-dark, each figure in much the same position as we left them. PAN OVER TO THE MAJOR who continues an exploration of the place, pounding on the wall, checking the floor, moving around in a spasm of activity which is obviously foredoomed to failure.

CUT TO:

#### 19- SERIES OF CLOSE SHOTS 22. OF THE OTHERS

As they watch him, ending up on a SHOT OF THE CLOWN.

#### CLOWN

Active fellow. Very active fellow. Very much Army. Gotta function. Has to do something. Compulsive worker.

#### 23. CLOSE SHOT MAJOR

Who whirls around toward him.

#### MAJOR

You a big-time psychologist, huh?

#### 24. TWO SHOT

#### CLOWN

I'm a clown. Which is neither here, there, nor anywhere. I could be a financier, a certified public accountant or a left-handed pitcher who

throws only curves. What difference does it make? We're here because we're here because we're here! You know you're wasting your time, don't you?

(he points toward the walls)

You're an idiot. An energetic idiot—but an idiot.

#### MAJOR

I want out. I'm not satisfied to sit here and heave deep sighs. I want out of here.

#### CLOWN

You got no monopoly on that. Major. We all want out of here.

#### TRAMP

Secunded.

#### BAGPIPER

But you're wasting your time. Each of us has gone around like a bloodhound—nose to wall, nose to floor. We can give you the dimensions of the room, even.

#### TRAMP

Thirty-nine feet circular.

#### MAJOR

(looking up, pointing)  
The height?

#### CLOWN

We figure about forty feet to the top.

#### MAJOR

What's out there?

#### CLOWN

You name it. Sky, artificial light, a fluorescent lamp, an illuminated microscope. You name it. One guess is as good as the other.

#### MAJOR

You've made guesses, then.

#### DANCER

(wistfully)

All kinds. We're on another planet. We're on a space ship heading for a planet. We're all insane and this is just a mirage ... an illusion.

#### TRAMP

We're dead and this is limbo.

#### BAGPIPER

We don't really exist—we're dream figures from somebody else's existence.



#### CLOWN

Or we're each of us having a dream. And everyone else is a part of the other's dream. Call it—you can have it. That's the one thing we have an abundance of. Possibilities. An infinite number of possibilities.

#### MAJOR

What about getting out of here? Anyone examine that as a possibility?

#### BAGPIPER

(chuckles)

Have you, Major? That's a solid wall. No crevices or ledges. No out-juttings. Nothing to hold onto or scramble for or even feel.

(he shakes his head)

We're trapped down here. There's no way out.

#### 25. CLOSE SHOT MAJOR

As he runs a hand over his face, shakes his head back and forth.

#### MAJOR

It's nightmare. It must be a nightmare.

#### CLOWN

It is indeed. But whose? Yours? Mine? The Scotchman's? The Ballet Dancer's? Just whose nightmare is it?

#### MAJOR

(very thoughtfully)  
But someone knows we're here.

#### DANCER

How so?

MAJOR

They have to. You've all been here awhile. Possibly a long while. Someone must feed you. Someone must give you water.

CUT TO:

26-

29. SERIES OF CLOSE SHOTS

Of the emotionless faces that stare at him.

30. CLOSE SHOT  
THE MAJOR

MAJOR

Well? Someone must bring food down.

31. CLOSE SHOT DANCER

As she shakes her head.

DANCER

There's been no food. Or water.

32. CLOSE SHOT MAJOR

MAJOR

But we'll starve to death or we'll die of thirst—

33. CLOSE SHOT DANCER

DANCER

(very softly)

That's the oddest thing of all. Do you understand?

34. TWO SHOT DANCER  
AND MAJOR FAVORING  
MAJOR

MAJOR

No. No, I don't understand.

DANCER

(again very softly)

Do you feel hungry, Major? Or thirsty? Or heat or cold? Or fatigue or discomfort?

CLOWN

Or anything? Do you feel anything?

35. CLOSE SHOT MAJOR

As he looks around and then down at himself. Again he touches his face.

MAJOR

(softly)

No. No, I don't feel anything. (then quickly)

But that doesn't prove



anything. This has been such a ... such a trauma. It's understandable that I don't feel thirsty or hungry. This is shock or the aftermath of shock.

36. FULL SHOT THE ROOM

DANCER

None of us have felt thirst or hunger or anything else since we've been here. And we've been here for an endless time, Major. For as long as we can remember.

MAJOR

(looks from face to face)

This is incredible. This is really incredible. Have you shouted?

CLOWN

Endlessly.

MAJOR

(his voice rising)

Have you pounded on the walls? I mean loud? I mean ... take off your shoes and pound on the walls. Have you done that?

DANCER

Often.

MAJOR

(desperation clawing at his voice)

Well ... well ... have you ... have you looked all around? Have you felt of the walls? Maybe there's a ... there's a

button or a lever. Or maybe there's a panel of some kind. A control button—

TRAMP

(gently)

For a while ... for a long while ... that's all we did. Hunted and searched and peered and looked and felt. (he shakes his head)

And we discovered that this was the universe right here. For our purposes—this is the universe. This little room.

37. CLOSE SHOT THE MAJOR

As once again he stares up toward the gray light above. At this moment there's a tremendous reverberating clang as if from some metallic bell that persists above them. The Major agonizedly clamps his hands to his ears as the sound persists, then gradually dies off. He slowly removes his hands and looks around the room.

38. PAN SHOT PAST THE  
OTHERS

As stoically and dispassionately they look back at him.

MAJOR

What was that? What was that noise?

DANCER

Happens often. A giant bell or something. That's what it sounds like.

39. CLOSE SHOT MAJOR

MAJOR

(stares up toward the light again)

This is a madhouse. That's what it is. It's a madhouse.

(then eyes wild, he flings himself against the wall and pounds on it screaming upward)

Hey! Hey up there! Let us out. Let us out of here. Please ... please ... let us out of here.

Again the giant clangorous sound of the huge bell. This time it vibrates the room and the various occupants spill this way and that way, thrown to the ground.

40. CLOSE SHOT THE FLOOR

As the Major is flung face down. He lies there motionless as the sound tapers off into a dissonant rumble and then disappears

altogether, leaving an absolute stillness.

#### 41. EXTREMELY TIGHT TOP HAT SHOT OF THE MAJOR

On the ground as his head turns and he's staring directly across at the Dancer just an arm's length away. Their eyes lock. Very slowly her hand inches across the floor to touch his hand, then hold it.

#### DANCER

Don't be afraid, Major. Please don't be afraid. In the beginning ... in the beginning it's ... it's hard. But after a while—

She leaves it unsaid.

#### 42. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE MAJOR

As he turns over to lie on his back, staring up at the light. His beard-stubbed face is tormented beyond words.

#### MAJOR

There must be ... there must be a way. Something we can do. There has to be. This sort of thing ... this sort of thing just doesn't happen.

#### 43. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE ROOM

As the Bagpiper rises, examining his bagpipe.

#### BAGPIPER

Few more like that—it'll wreck my bagpipe.

#### TRAMP

Girl, why don't you dance for us? That makes the time pass.

#### BAGPIPER

I'll play for you.

#### DANCER

I've already danced for you. It doesn't do any good.

#### CLOWN

It passes the time. How about it? The Major's never seen you dance.

#### 44. CLOSE SHOT MAJOR

As he bolts to a sitting position, face close to camera.

#### MAJOR

The Major doesn't want to see

her dance. The Major's not interested. All the Major wants to do is get out of here.

(he moves across the room close to the wall, and feels of it. More to himself than to the others)

It's smooth.

(he feels around again)

Absolutely smooth. Unbroken.

And high. Too high. Not even a place for a toothhold.

Nothing.

(he steps back a foot, looking up and around)

Through the wall.

(he whirls around toward them)

Did you ever think of that? A hole through the wall? Or what about the floor? Smash a hole in the floor and tunnel out.

#### CLOWN

We don't know how thick it is. The walls or the floor.

The soldier moves toward him, grabbing him.

#### MAJOR

Then find out.

(still holding the clown he whirls toward the others)

Find out! Try! Don't just ...

don't just sit there like ... like lumps. Like things. Like mindless, soundless idiots.

Telling a girl to dance. If it is a madhouse—maybe you deserve to be in a madhouse.

All of you. I think you're mad. I think you're out of your ever-lovin' heads.

(he releases the clown and moves back toward the wall, feeling it again)

Try a hole through the wall. That's the first thing to do. Try to force a hole through it.

(then over his shoulder to the others)

How about it? A hole through the wall. See if we can get out that way.

#### CLOWN

That's very bright. Terribly ingenious. Highly imaginative. Incredibly inventive.

(then he laughs again, the cackling, high-pitched, miserably offensive laugh)

With what? With our hands? With our fingernails?

#### 45. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT THE MAJOR

As his eyes dart around and then stop.

#### 46. ANGLE SHOT OF HIM FROM ABOVE

As he moves across the room to the spot he was sitting in. There lies a cape, a military cap and a sword in a scabbard. He whips the sword out and holds it up.

#### MAJOR

With this!

(he rushes toward the wall)

With this!

He places the point of the sword against the wall and starts to jab furiously, frenzied jabs and there is the sound of metal against metal, but it only excites him and forces him to try harder. He keeps smashing the blade against the wall until.

CUT TO.

#### 47. CLOSE SHOT THE WALL

As the point of the sword hits it and breaks apart.

#### 48. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT THE MAJOR

As he leans, perspiring, against the wall. He looks slowly at the broken sword in his hand and lets it drop to the floor. Then he turns so that his face is buried against the wall and he starts to sob. The room is absolutely quiet.

CUT TO.

#### 49. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE OTHERS

As they look at one another.





# Five Characters in Search of an Exit

## 50. CLOSE SHOT DANCER

As she moves to the Major's side and touches his shoulder. He stops crying and very slowly turns toward her.

## DANCER

Major? Please, Major ... after a while ... after a while it becomes easier.

(then looking away)

Perhaps ... there are a lot of dungeons like this. Maybe we've just never heard of them before. Maybe they're for the ... for the unloved. Maybe that's who we are. The unloved.

The Major slowly reaches out and holds the girl tightly.

## MAJOR

We have names. We're people. And that means ... we belong somewhere. There are others who care about us. Somewhere ... somehow ... we've got a life that's been cut away from us and we've got to find it again. Each of us. (he releases her, his eyes wild, the sweat rolling down his face. He looks down at the floor)

A tunnel! That's what we'll do. We'll dig a tunnel.

He drops to his knees, scabbles around and picks up the remnant of his sword. Holding it with two hands, he starts to plunge it against the floor and again the metallic clank of metal against metal testifies to the fruitless effort.

## 51. TOP HAT SHOT OF THE MAJOR

Looking directly at him as his arms go up and down, up and down. And then on the last swipe downward, his head falls forward and he just crouches there silently, his hands out in front of him, holding the sword, his eyes tightly shut. Suddenly there's the loud, clangorous bell from above that shakes the room before it ultimately dies away.

## 52. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE MAJOR

As he rises, shoulders slumped, head down. He lunges across the

room over to the wall, puts his back to it and slides down to a sitting position, lets his head topple sideways so that he is staring up at an angle.

## 53. LONG ANGLE SHOT MAJOR'S POV

Of the gray light above.

## 54. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING DOWN TOWARD MAJOR

As he stares upward.

## MAJOR

I know where we are. It suddenly occurs to me. (he laughs a very low, soft laugh that ends almost on a sob) Funny none of you ever thought of it, but it has to be.

## DANCER

(alongside, in a whisper) Where? Where are we?

## MAJOR

(slowly turns to look at her) Why my dear young lady ... how unobservant. How insensitive. When the whole thing all fits together.

## DANCER

Please tell me where.

THE CAMERA MOVES IN FOR AN EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT of the contorted, misery-filled face of the major.

## MAJOR

Ladies and gentlemen ... it seems quite apparent. It seems quite unequivocal. We ... all of us ... we are in hell. God help us ... we are in hell!

SLOW FADE TO BLACK.

## END ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE ON

## 55. INT. ROOM

As before. A PAN SHOT ACROSS THE FACES of all of them, the Tramp, the Clown, the Bagpiper, the Dancer, as they look at one another and listen to the sound of the Major's broken sword

clanking against metal over and over and over again.

## CLOWN

(with his grotesque smile) Never say die, that one.

## BAGPIPER

(a little sadly)

He'll come to it eventually, just as we did.

## TRAMP

Let him be. If he gets some satisfaction out of activity, well, let him have his fun.

## 56. CLOSE SHOT DANCER

Who looks back at the others.

## DANCER

At least he's trying.

## 57. CLOSE SHOT CLOWN

## CLOWN

He is indeed. He's been "trying" for several hours now. You can't help but admire that kind of persistence, even though it's a little like trying to empty an ocean with a cup or count out the grains of sand in a desert or reach up to try to touch stars.

(he shrugs)

So let him dip and count and reach out

(he shakes his head)

It can't help....

(then the lopsided grin through his paint)

But I fail to see how it could hurt ... under the circumstances

## 58. DIFFERENT ANGLE OF THEM

As the Major returns to their group.

## MAJOR

It's metal. Or at least it's the hardest wood I've ever come across. Circular, smooth and no place to climb.

## CLOWN

All of which we could have told you some hours ago.

## MAJOR

(sits down, wiping his face)

We've got to figure out something else.

## CLOWN

Oh do ... do! Maybe we

could pretend we're acrobats  
(he extends his hands, the fingers  
interlocking)

Alley oop! And over the top!

**59. CLOSE SHOT BAGPIPER**  
Who laughs.

**60. CLOSE SHOT THE TRAMP**  
Who smiles.

**61. CLOSE SHOT THE DANCER**  
Who has a half-sad smile that suddenly gives way to an expression of deep and sudden thought and awareness.

**DANCER**  
Wait a minute—!

**62. GROUP SHOT**

**CLOWN**  
Oh, come now—this is becoming a little idiotic—

**DANCER**  
Why not?

**CLOWN**  
Why not what?

**DANCER**  
What you said. Acrobatics.

**CLOWN**  
A figure of speech, my dear, not meant to be taken seriously. I will grant you that we have somehow forfeited some of our human dignity. But we are nonetheless governed by human frailties, not the least of which is gravity. You may know some acrobatics that I'm quite unaware of.

**MAJOR**  
(very suddenly)  
I see what she's getting at.  
(he looks around)

Don't any of you see? One on top of the other standing one each other's shoulders.  
(to the Clown)

How about that? That's the way it's done in circuses, isn't it?

**CLOWN**  
(scratching the side of his painted face)  
I'll ask him when he comes in.  
(then cocking his head with a sardonic look)

I can assure you that I may

wear the costume of the clown, but I have no recollection of having been one.

(he shrugs)  
We may not feel thirst or hunger, but pain is quite another thing. We might very well feel pain.

(looking up toward the high wall)

And a fall from ten, fifteen feet up down to this hard floor—well, this is a sensation I'd as well do without.

**DANCER**  
It's a chance.

**CLOWN**  
(with a gesture)  
Your pardon, ma'am, but no thank you.

**MAJOR**  
(intensely)  
She's right. It is a chance. Come on. The weight'll go on the first person, so I'll start it. The Clown on top of me, then the Tramp, then the Bagpiper, then the girl. What do you say?

**BAGPIPER**  
(looks up, staring toward the distant light)  
We'd never reach it.

**TRAMP**  
We could try. Who's to say we wouldn't reach it? We're not sure how high it is.

**CLOWN**  
That's the point. We'd be exerting ourselves for nothing. That could be a hundred feet up there, for all we know. Or two hundred or three hundred. Why don't we sit down and have some entertainment?

**MAJOR**  
(on his feet)  
Come on, let's try it. Come on. Clown, on my shoulders.

**CLOWN**  
(rises, shrugs)  
Observation, things were far more simple before you arrived.

(then with a deep resigned breath)

However, I go with the majority.



**63. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE ROOM**

As the Clown gets to the Major's shoulders, wavering a little and reaching behind him to the wall for support. Then the Tramp inexpertly, but with great resolve, scrambles up past the Major and finally lands atop the Clown's shoulders.

**64. DIFFERENT ANGLE**

As the Bagpiper slowly and with vast effort climbs the wavering human totem pole until he too is on the top.

**65. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP AT HIM**

As he looks down toward the dancer.

**BAGPIPER**  
All right, miss, it's up to you.

**DANCER**  
How high? Can you see the top? Is there a ledge or anything?

**66. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE BAGPIPER**

As he very gingerly turns his head to stare upward then looks down.

**BAGPIPER**  
I guess seven or eight feet to the top. Maybe more.

**67. CLOSE SHOT THE MAJOR**

Perspiring with the effort of all the weight atop him and wavering left and right.

**MAJOR**  
Or less.  
(then to the girl)  
Come on. Go very carefully. You'll make it.

# Five Characters in Search of an Exit

## 68. CLOSE SHOT DANCER

As she starts to scramble up.

## 69. MOVING SHOT WITH HER

As she moves from waist to shoulder to waist to shoulder.

## 70. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN AT THEM

The Dancer slowly reaching the top. The pole starts to sway left and right and there are exclamations of fright, then they steady themselves and the girl slowly starts to reach up, trying to grasp the ledge.

## 71. CLOSE SHOT LEDGE

With the Dancer's fingers inching their way up toward it.

DANCER

I ... I ... can't reach it! It's about ... it's about eight or ten inches above me.

## 72. CLOSE SHOT MAJOR

MAJOR

Try ... stretch a little more ... try. You've got to try!

## 73. HIGH ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN AGAIN

On the Dancer, as with a massive effort she squeezes her fingers forward, extending them to their absolute fullest.

## 74. CLOSE SHOT LEDGE

As the fingers get closer and closer then suddenly scabble against the bare wall. The dancer lets out a scream.

## 75. ANGLE SHOT FROM BELOW

As she starts to fall and then gradually, almost gracefully, the whole edifice crumbles, each one falling in a different direction and plummeting to the ground.

## 76. FULL SHOT THE ROOM

As they lie around in the positions where they've fallen, out of breath and unable to move. The Major looks up wet-eyed, to the top.

MAJOR

So close! We were so close. (then to the others)

We'll try it again.

CLOWN

Nonsense. We could have broken our necks. We are not trying it again.

MAJOR

(to the Dancer)

How much farther? How much more would it have taken?

DANCER

It was only a few inches. I could almost ... almost feel it.

MAJOR

(looks away, fists clenching and unclenching)

What if—

CLOWN

(interrupting)

What if what? I respect persistence as much as the next one. But stupidity—that happens to be a waste of time and an expenditure of energy to no avail.

MAJOR

If we were just a few inches shy ... if that's all it took, I could straighten up more on the bottom. We could each of us straighten up more. That would give her the height she needs. Come on, let's try again.

CLOWN

(rolling his eyes upwards)

My dear young warrior ... would that you had not arrived. Things were so much simpler before.

(another deep breath)

However ... leave us give it another old college try!

He mounts the Major's shoulders, then reaches down for the Tramp.

77-

## 81. DIFFERENT SHOTS

Of the human ladder as once again it takes form, winding up with the Dancer reaching for the ledge.

## 82. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN AT HER

As once again she stretches her hands upwards, this time with fingers inching slowly up until they touch the top ledge, then convulse around it, her left hand following and its fingers, too,

clutch the ledge. At this given instant the sound of the clangorous bell starts. The ladder moves slowly left and right. The Dancer lets out a little scream as her grasp is broken and once again the ladder tumbles down to the ground, person by person.

## 83. FULL SHOT THE ROOM

As the figures lie in little crumpled knots around the floor. A SLOW PAN UP THE WALL until we're staring up toward the gray light and once again the bell sends out its clangorous din.

DISSOLVE TO.

## 84. ANOTHER ANGLE OF THE ROOM

All but the Major remain on the floor. He stands near the center of the room staring up.

CLOWN

Glutton for punishment, Major!

MAJOR

That's all in the point of view.

CLOWN

Haven't you about had it? All we've accomplished are some bruises and a rather vast disappointment.

The Major turns to look at the Ballet Dancer who sits with her back against the wall, obviously in pain. He walks over to her and kneels in front of her.

MAJOR

How's the leg?

DANCER

(smiles)

The knee's twisted, I think. But I'll be all right.

MAJOR

(nods, looks up)

You were almost there. You had your fingers over the ledge.

TRAMP

A miss is as good as a mile.

MAJOR

Not in this case. A miss by about two or three inches ... that's hardly a mile!

(he looks around the room again and his eyes light on the broken remains of the sword, he picks it



up, stares around the room)

This is what we do next. Same thing.

(then quickly)

Without the girl. The Clown, the Tramp, the Bagpiper, and then I'll climb to the top. I'll tie a rope to the haft of this sword, fling it over the top. Let it hook there.

CLOWN

Ingenious. But hadn't one of us better run over to the hardware store and pick up the rope?

TRAMP

(glumly)

He's right. We have no rope.

MAJOR

Strips of cloth. Part of what we're wearing. Come on—it's a chance!

#### 85. CLOSE SHOT THE CLOWN

As he strips off first one sleeve, then the other, ties them in a knot hands them to the Major.

CLOWN

Six feet of excellent material—courtesy of Pagliacci—or whoever I am!

#### 86. DIFFERENT ANGLE OF THEM

As they each tear off strips of their clothing, handing them to the Major who in turn starts to tie a whole length of cloth.

#### 87. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE MAJOR

As he looks up from the tying toward the top.

MAJOR

(intensely)

This time we make it. The rope tied to the haft of this sword, then over the top hooked to the ledge. I'm up and over.

#### 88. CLOSE SHOT THE CLOWN

CLOWN

(quietly)

And then what?

#### 89. CLOSE SHOT THE MAJOR

MAJOR

We'll worry about that when it comes. Somehow I'll get you out of here. But nobody gets out until somebody gets out. Now that's logic that you can live with!

DISSOLVE TO.

90—

#### 92. SERIES OF SHOTS

Of their forming the ladder again, this time the Clown on the bottom, followed by the Tramp, then the Bagpiper arriving on top of the Tramp's shoulders. He reaches down toward the Major.

BAGPIPER

Let's go.

CLOWN

Indeed! Leave us go. I can't take this much longer.

#### 93. ANOTHER ANGLE THE MAJOR

As he starts up the human ladder, passes the perspiring faces of the other three men who look set, grim, determined and desperately overexerted. He almost stumbles when he reaches the Bagpiper, but finally, hanging onto his belt, hoists himself up on top of his shoulders. He swings the rope around and around, then flings it up.

CUT TO.

#### 94. CLOSE SHOT THE LEDGE

As once again the haft hooks on and then disengages to swing back down.

#### 95. CLOSE SHOT THE MAJOR

As he starts to swing again, this time with even more effort, flings it up.

CUT TO.

#### 96. CLOSE SHOT THE LEDGE

As once again the haft hooks on

and then disengages to swing back down.

#### 97. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN

At the human ladder as it sways precariously and once again, as a last major effort, he swings the rope up.

#### 98. CLOSE SHOT THE LEDGE AS THE HAFT CONNECTS

As this time it hooks securely.

#### 99. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP

From the bottom toward the ladder as the Major starts to pull on the rope, then after testing the pressure, starts a slow ascent upward, going hand over hand over the cloth, his feet walking up flylike on the wall.

#### 100. CLOSER SHOT THE RIM

As we see one of the Major's hands slowly reach up, grab on, scabble on top of the ledge, finally the fingers hooking over the top of it to be joined by the other hand, and then with a massive effort the Major pulls himself up, over and on top of the ledge where he straddles it for a moment, his eyes closed, perspiration pouring down his face.

CUT TO.

#### 101. MED. CLOSE GROUP SHOT

Of the others down at the bottom, looking up.

CLOWN

Well? What's up there?

TRAMP

What do you see?

DANCER

(painfully rising)

Major ... Major where are we?

#### 102. A VERY QUICK PAN UP THE WALL

Until we zoom into an extremely tight close shot of the Major's face as his eyes go wide in absolute, horrified amazement. He slowly shakes his head back and forth and all of a sudden

# Five Characters in Search of an Exit

lets out a scream and topples forward.

CUT TO.

## 103. CLOSE SHOT THE SNOWY GROUND

As the Major lands on it from above, furrowing deep, face first into the snow.

ABRUPT CUT TO.

## 104. MED. CLOSE GROUP SHOT OF THE OTHERS AT THE BOTTOM

As they stare up, silently, toward the opening and hearing nothing but silence. The Clown slowly turns.

CLOWN

A brave man. But not a very bright one.

DANCER

He'll be back. I know he'll be back. He'll come and get us.

CLOWN

(slowly turns to her, shakes his head)

He may be back ... but it won't be to get us

(then looking up toward the top)

He may have been right at that. He may have been very right. This may be hell.

## 105. SLOW PAN UP THE WALL

Until we reach the top of the ledge.

DISSOLVE TO.

## 106. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN AT FIGURE OF SOLDIER

In the snow. Suddenly into the frame walk a pair of giant feet. CAMERA PULLS BACK for a shot of a little girl who stands in the snow all bundled up and reaches down slowly and picks up the broken figure of the Major, a floppy battered doll in a torn uniform. Then she turns and holds it out.

## 107. PAN OVER FOR SHOT OF WOMAN

In what is similar to a Salvation Army uniform. She stands alongside of a barrel and swings a small bell.

CUT TO.

## 108. CLOSE SHOT SIGN ON BARREL

"View Park Girl's Home, Ages two to ten. Seventeenth Annual Christmas Doll Drive."

LITTLE GIRL

I found this one in the snow. Someone must have dropped it.

WOMAN

(smiles)

Oh, thank you dear. Just drop it in the barrel there, would you?

The child carries the doll over to the barrel and drops it down, then peers into the darkness below.

LITTLE GIRL

Looks like you've got quite a few dolls.

WOMAN

Not as many as we'd like. They're for the orphans, you know. But it's early and we just started.

(she smiles, winks, rings the bell back and forth)

Dolls for Christmas ... dolls for Christmas ... open your hearts, friends, and bring in your old dolls so that the underprivileged little ones can have a pleasant Christmas too! Dolls for Christmas ...

dolls for Christmas ... dolls for Christmas ...

Over her voice we PAN DOWN TO HER SWINGING ARM with the bell, then

SLOWLY DISSOLVE TO.

## 109. INT. THE BARREL

The sound of the bell, once again the big, clangorous din. PAN SHOT ACROSS THE FIGURES of the inhabitants at the bottom of the barrel. The Tramp, Clown, Bagpiper, Ballet Dancer and Major are now just dolls, propped up or lying in doll-like immobility, their faces painted, static, motionless things. SLOW PAN OVER to where the Dancer sits propped up against the wall. Then a SLOW PAN OVER TO HER HAND which lies at her side. The hand slowly moves across until it touches the hand of the disheveled, battered soldier doll alongside. Then the fingers slowly intertwine, then we take a SLOW PAN BACK OVER TO THE FACE of the Ballet Dancer. It is nothing more than a painted mask, except at this moment we see tears rolling slowly down the painted cheeks. THE CAMERA STARTS A SLOW PAN over the dolls' figures and we hear Serling's voice.

SERLING'S VOICE

Just a barrel ... a dark depository where are kept the counterfeit, make-believe pieces of plaster and cloth wrought in the distorted image of human life. But this added hopeful note ... perhaps they are unloved only for the moment. In the arms of children ... there can be nothing but love. A clown, a tramp, a bagpipe player, a ballet dancer and a major. Tonight's cast of players ... on the odd stage known as ... the Twilight Zone.

THE CAMERA CONTINUES ITS PAN UP THE WALL until it's shooting down at the small, lifeless clumps at the bottom.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END 



# Relive the past!

JUNE '81: Stephen King's new thriller, *The Jaunt*; Robert Bloch interview; two long-lost tales by Anthony Boucher; classic TZ script, *The After Hours*; 100 Years of Fantasy illustration; *Outland* preview; *Show-by-Show* #3. JULY: A dozen new tales by Robert Silverberg, Robert Shekley, Ron Goulart, Charles L. Grant, Stanley Schmidt, & others; *Superman's* Richard Donner on directing *The Twilight Zone*; Serling's tv chiller, *The Eye of the Beholder*; *Show-by-Show* #4. SEPTEMBER: Richard Matheson interview; new fiction by John Sladek, Gary Brandner, & Parke Godwin; tv history, *Forerunners of 'The Twilight Zone'*; Serling classic, *Time Enough at Last*; Dr. Van Helsing on fear of ghosts; *Show-by-Show* #6. NOVEMBER: New tales by Tanith Lee, Thomas Disch, Ramsey Campbell, Stanley Schmidt, & Clark Howard; John Saul interview; TZ script, *Death's Head Revisited*; preview of *Halloween II*; Dr. Van Helsing on the joy of terror; *Show-by-Show* #8. DECEMBER: An outspoken interview with Harlan Ellison; *The Midnight Sun*, TZ classic script; M.R. James profile & James classic, *The Ash-Tree: Quest for Fire* preview; 8 new tales of humor & horror; *Show-by-Show* #9. JANUARY '82: Rod Serling recalls *My Most Memorable Christmas*; Frank Belknap Long recalls H.P. Lovecraft; *Ghost Story* preview; fiction by Robert Shekley, Reginald Bretnor, Parke Godwin, Connie Willis, & John Morressy; *The Night of the Meek*, Santa in TZ classic; LeFanu profile & classic tale; *Show-by-Show* #10. MARCH: Fritz Leiber interview, plus Leiber classic; 8 new tales by Ron Goulart, Robert Vardeman, & others; on the set of *The Thing*; preview of *Stab*, with Roy Scheider & Meryl Streep; Serling's *A Passage for Trumpet*; *Show-by-Show* #12. MAY: Peter Straub's new novelette, *The General's Wife*; Terry Gilliam interview; on the *Creepshow* set with Stephen King & George Romero; Serling's *The Four of Us Are Dying*, plus George Clayton Johnson's original story; 7 new tales by Connie Willis, Kit Reed, & others; *Dark Crystal* preview; *Tierney's Doomsday Poems*; *Show-by-Show* #14. JUNE: Richard Matheson's unseen TZ script, *The Doll*; Philip K. Dick interview; *Blade Runner* preview; *Fantasy* in Clay photo feature; 9 new tales by Pamela Sargent, Richard Christian Matheson, & others; *Show-by-Show* #15. JULY: Stories by Robert Silverberg, Joan Aiken, & Joe Lansdale; Stephen King on films, Thomas Disch on books; Robertson Davies interview & story; *Ghostly Britain* photos; preview of *The Thing*; Serling's *100 Yards Over the Rim*; making *The Last Horror Film*; *Show-by-Show* #16. AUGUST: Poe & Robert Bloch together in *The Lighthouse*; Douglas Hayes, TZ director, interviewed; funhouse photo-tour; 7 new stories; a look at *Tron*, *Poltergeist*, and *E.T.*; Serling's *The Trade-Ins*; *Show-by-Show* #17. SEPTEMBER: Long-lost Serling radio script; previews of *Creepshow* and *Something Wicked*; Paul Schrader interview; special Arthur Machen section; 7 new tales; new horror quiz; *Show-by-Show* #18. OCTOBER: Nicholas Meyer interview on *Star Trek*; Ireland's ghostly mansions; tales by Avram Davidson and Robert Shekley; Serling's *In Praise of Pip*; *Show-by-Show* #19. NOVEMBER: John Carpenter interview; Stephen King on *The Evil Dead*; *Halloween III* preview; Serling's *Quality of Mercy*; 8 great tales for Halloween; *Show-by-Show* #20. DECEMBER: *Living Doll*, Charles Beaumont's TZ classic; Ridley Scott's interview; L.P. Hartley profile; Xtro preview; 8 new stories; *Show-by-Show* #21. JAN.-FEB. '83: Color fantasy-film wrap-up; Roald Dahl interview; Serling's lost Christmas Carol, plus *One for the Angels*; E. T. at the U.N.; *Show-by-Show* #22. MARCH-APRIL: Contest prizewinners; Serling's own *Twilight Zone* movie; Colin Wilson interview; *The Hunger* preview; TZ script & story by Richard Matheson; *Show-by-Show* #23. MAY-JUNE: Stephen King's new novelette *The Raft* and 6 more tales; V.C. Andrews interview; previews of *Something Wicked*, *Psycho II*, *The Keep*; Fanasy's *Five-Foot Shelf*; Serling's *The Lonely*; *Show-by-Show* #24.



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